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THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO

ENDURING EMPIRES:

STRATEGIES OF IMPERIAL PERSISTENCE

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A DISSERTATION SUBMITTED TO
THE FACULTY OF THE DIVISION OF THE SOCIAL SCIENCES
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DEPARTMENT OF POLITICAL SCIENCE

BY

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction

This dissertation analyzes the dynamics of modern empire. It asks why some empires were able to maintain control of their territories for long periods of time, while others were not. Why, for example, was the Communist Party able to restore and even expand the former Russian Empire, whereas the Ottomans, Austro-Hungarians, and French were forced to abandon their empires? This dissertation seeks to determine the conditions under which empires have persisted, particularly in the modern era of the nation-state.

The conventional wisdom concerning empires is that they can no longer exist, let alone persist, because nationalism exacts enormous costs that the central power is unable or unwilling to pay. Added to this, the international environment now recognizes the modern nation-state as the only legitimate form of political control and

eschews any state with imperial intentions.¹ Since empires impose control over another political society they stand in direct opposition to the principles of democracy and a nation's right for self-determination. In contrast, I argue that empires are not always perceived as illegitimate by their peripheral societies and when they are not, they can persist for long periods of time.

Most theories on empire identify common reasons that empires collapse. Significantly, the decline of empire has been attributed to over-expansion, great power balancing, growth of the periphery, and more recently, nationalism.² Still, if all empires collapse for similar reasons, as many theorists suggest, what then accounts for differences in when they collapse? Currently, explanations and theories for why empires rise and fall do not fully address the reasons why some empires lasted for *centuries* while others collapsed after only a *decade*. In other words, there is no theoretically informed, comparative analysis that suggests how some empires were able to endure longer than others.

¹ This perspective on empire and the nation-state is best represented by Woodrow Wilson's call for self-determination for the colonized people of the world. For a review of how perspectives on empire have changed over time see Chapter 1 of D. C. B. Lieven, *Empire: The Russian Empire and Its Rivals* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 2001).

² See Benedict R. Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*, Rev. and extended ed. (London; New York: Verso, 1991), Michael W. Doyle, *Empires*, *Cornell Studies in Comparative History*. (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1986), Paul M. Kennedy, *The Rise and Fall of the Great Powers: Economic Change and Military Conflict from 1500 to 2000* (New York, NY: Random House, 1987), Charles Kupchan, *The Vulnerability of Empire*, *Cornell Studies in Security Affairs* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1994), Jack L. Snyder, *Myths of Empire: Domestic Politics and International Ambition*, *Cornell Studies in Security Affairs* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1991), Ronald Grigor Suny and Terry Martin, *A State of Nations: Empire and Nation-Making in the Age of Lenin and Stalin* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2001).

In order to understand the variations in imperial persistence, this dissertation pursues a more tractable and theoretically focused question. How do empires maintain control of their peripheral societies for long periods of time? Since contingent events such as wars, natural disasters, and particular leaders have often been more important in accounting for the length of time an empire endured rather than any general cause, this dissertation does not attempt to present a theory that fully explains why one empire lasted longer than another. Instead, the length of time that various empires have endured was used as an indicator of which imperial practices may have been more effective for controlling the periphery for long periods of time. Rather than explaining duration, this dissertation identifies the sources of persistent imperial control.

Empires establish and maintain control through coercion, institutions, and integration. Empires are typically forged through coercion in the form of conquest and invasion. Coercion is often the primary method for establishing imperial control. The conventional wisdom is that empires also *maintain* themselves through coercion. However, simply “capturing” other markets or continuing to extract tribute from the periphery does not lead to a more durable empire. Instead, I argue that centralized institutions and developing transnational integration are more important than coercion in maintaining an empire for long periods of time. Imperial institutions provide minimal public goods and extend centralized bureaucratic control to the periphery while transnational integration results from developing political, social, and economic relations with and among the periphery. Together, these two processes decrease the

likelihood of peripheral resistance by building acceptance for continued rule from the center. All states rely on some level of acceptance from their citizens in order to decrease the costs of maintaining order in society. Ultimately, a reliance on institutions and integration reduces the cost of maintaining the empire

Eventually, all empires end. How long they last and whether they collapse or transition to some type of federated or multinational state often depends on how the empire chooses to maintain control of the periphery. While some empires have been able to maintain control over their peripheries primarily through repression and coercion with little attempt to integrate, they have not done so for any considerable length of time. This dissertation does not argue that legitimate, sovereign powers have not been overthrown or that autocratic or repressive governments have not been able to persist. Rather, I argue that empires are able to maintain control over their peripheral societies for long periods of time when they attempt to develop peripheral acceptance through centralized institutions and continuing transnational integration.

1.2 Literature on Empires and Collapse

A review of the history of empires reveals that collapse occurs when the empire is defeated in a great power war or when the peripheries gain their independence. Sometimes, these two processes are interrelated as metropolitan defeat

can lead to peripheral agitation. In the modern era, there appears to be a shift in the way empires collapse. Rather than through conquest or defeat in war, modern empires increasingly collapsed as a result of the periphery gaining independence from the metropole (Table 1.1). In some cases this occurred after the metropole was defeated in war (e.g., Spanish, Ottoman, Habsburg), but the resulting collapse arose from some type of movement within the periphery demanding independence. With the exception of Japan, Germany, and the Moguls, all empires in the modern era have ended when the peripheries gained independence from the metropole.³ Typically, that independence was achieved through active rebellion against the metropole, though some peripheries were simply abandoned as part of a sweeping decision by the metropole to decolonize.

³ Others have come to a similar conclusion, though usually in the context of nationalism. See for example Mark R. Beissinger, *Nationalist Mobilization and the Collapse of the Soviet State*, *Cambridge Studies in Comparative Politics* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2002).

	Start	End	Type of Collapse
Soviet	1917	1990	Peripheral Independence
Portuguese	1499	1974	Peripheral Independence
French II	1830	1960	Peripheral Independence
British	1690	1960	Peripheral Independence
Italian	1882	1947	Peripheral Independence
Japan	1900	1945	Conquest
German	1871	1918	Conquest
Habsburg	1526	1918	Conquest / Peripheral Indep
Ottoman	1350	1918	Conquest / Peripheral Indep
Russian	1721	1917	Peripheral Independence
Manchu	1644	1911	Peripheral Independence
Spanish	1515	1898	Conquest / Peripheral Indep
Mogul	1526	1857	Conquest
French I	1605	1815	Conquest / Peripheral Indep
Holy Roman	962	1806	Conquest / Peripheral Indep
Swedish	1560	1660	Peripheral Independence
Inca	1427	1521	Conquest
Aztec	1375	1521	Conquest
Mongol	1200	1480	Conquest
Byzantine	312	1453	Conquest
Islamic	622	1258	Conquest
Bulgarian	681	1018	Conquest
Roman	23 (BC)	476	Conquest

Table 1.1 Collapse of Empire

This is not to conclude that modern empires are no longer threatened by other great powers or that they are no longer concerned with maintaining their status as a great power. Survival of the state (empire) will always remain a priority. The greatest challenge to the persistence of a modern empire, however, comes primarily from the periphery. Even the wave of decolonization in the twentieth century was not the result of some international rejection of empire, but rather the stark realization that maintaining an empire, especially with a resistant or rebellious periphery, was no longer worth the cost. Still, not all peripheries rebelled and not all wished for political independence. Even more interesting, the Soviet Union actually forged and maintained an empire during a period of time when other great powers were rapidly abandoning their peripheries. How then do empires maintain control over their peripheries, especially in the modern era?

1.2.1 Imperial Power

Much of the international relations literature concentrates on the dominant material power of the metropole as the way empires establish control. Consequently, empires are theorized to collapse because of a decline in power that results from imperial overstretch, great power balancing, or the natural rise and fall of great powers.⁴ Included in these models of imperial collapse are various reasons for

⁴ For different examples of this logic see Kennedy, *The Rise and Fall of the Great Powers: Economic Change and Military Conflict from 1500 to 2000*, Kupchan, *The Vulnerability of Empire*, Snyder, *Myths of Empire: Domestic Politics and International Ambition*.

imperial expansion such as the desire for increased security; pursuit of economic growth through expanded markets and resources; or, the spread of ideologies such as modernization, communism, or democracy. As empires expand, they must find new sources of revenue to finance the increasing costs of a growing and usually resistant periphery all the while guarding against external threats from the international system. The implication is that empires persist primarily through the accumulation of power and the maintenance of an international hierarchical system.⁵ The issue of imperial persistence is therefore all about maintaining superior power with respect to the periphery and other great powers.

According to this view, the Soviet Union in the 1980s was an overextended empire and its power had waned considerably with respect to other great powers. This erosion of power further resulted in an inability to control the periphery and maintain the empire. Eventually, the Soviet Union lost enough power that it collapsed. In reality, the Soviet Union retained its great power status even right up to the moment it collapsed, and it was never threatened with a loss of its peripheries by other powers in the same way that so many empires were throughout the nineteenth century. Further, Gorbachev and the Communist Central Party maintained significant material power to put down revolts and assert Moscow's control over the peripheries. In short, superior power and material capabilities were not sufficient to protect the

⁵ For recent arguments on how empires sustain their power see Robert D. Kaplan, "Supremacy by Stealth," *Atlantic Monthly* 292, no. 1 (2003), Stephen Peter Rosen, "An Empire, If You Can Keep It," *National Interest*, no. 71 (2003).

Soviet Union from collapsing. An emphasis on the importance of relative power vis-à-vis other great powers and the periphery ignores cases where the metropole did have sufficient material power to maintain control of the periphery but nonetheless lost wars of independence or abandoned empire for political reasons.

1.2.2 Nationalism

Alternatively, there is a considerable amount of comparative literature that locates the collapse of empire with the rise of nationalism. Modern empires (like the Soviet Union and other 20th century empires) are besieged with peripheries that actively resist and fight against the metropole. Again, as Table 1 shows, nearly all of the empires in the twentieth century collapsed as a result of peripheries demanding (and often fighting for) political independence. According to the logic of nationalism, empires fail in the modern era because they are directly opposed to the principles of democracy and self-determination espoused in the discourse of the nation.⁶ The inherent right of pre-existing nations to govern themselves and pursue political independence becomes a source of dissension in the periphery that fractures an empire, often violently. The wave of decolonization following World War II, the gruesome wars of independence for Vietnam, Algeria, Afghanistan and many others testify to the fact that modern empires are besieged by nationalism in the periphery.

⁶ Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*, Suny and Martin, *A State of Nations: Empire and Nation-Making in the Age of Lenin and Stalin*.

As a result, many believe that modern empires are inherently doomed to collapse because they are simply untenable in the age of nationalism.⁷

According to this nationalistic view, the Soviet Union's fifteen Republics had simply been biding their time waiting for an opportunity to break free from the oppressive, authoritarian Communist government and its inefficient command economy. These nascent nations were bolstered by international support for self-determination and encouraged to break away from the repressive regime. Clearly, nationalist sentiment and movements for independence were growing in strength primarily in Eastern Europe, but the complete breakdown of the Soviet Union was not simply the result of some latent nationalism that existed within each of the peripheries. The Soviet Republics were not all poised to revolt even as late as the summer of 1991 and the collapse of the Soviet Union was certainly not the inevitable result of nationalism.⁸

Theoretically, if empires adopt strategies that prevent nationalist movements from forming in the periphery, then they should persist longer. As pointed out earlier, many believe that empires are simply not possible in the modern era because every

⁷ Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* 93, Suny and Martin, *A State of Nations: Empire and Nation-Making in the Age of Lenin and Stalin* 33. John Mearsheimer, lecture on War and the Nation State, April, 2005.

⁸ For detailed arguments supporting this claim see: Beissinger, *Nationalist Mobilization and the Collapse of the Soviet State*, Stephen Kotkin, *Armageddon Averted: The Soviet Collapse, 1970-2000* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), Moshe Lewin, *The Gorbachev Phenomenon: A Historical Interpretation* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1988), Michael McFaul, *Russia's Unfinished Revolution: Political Change from Gorbachev to Putin* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 2001).

nation has an inherent right to self-rule, especially those controlled by an empire. Nonetheless, if nationalism in the periphery does not arise to demand political independence, then the empire should be able to persist. As this dissertation will show, contrary to most perceptions, the Soviet Union, the world's most recent empire, was not continually threatened by widespread nationalism demonstrating that empire was certainly possible even in the modern era.

1.2.3 Theory of Imperial Persistence

Two of the best comparative works on empire, Michael Doyle's *Empires* and Dominic Lieven's *Empire: The Russian Empire and Its Rivals* offer some insights into how empires persist.⁹ Doyle deftly merges existing theories on imperialism to arrive at a more complete, although less parsimonious, explanation for Europe's rapid colonization of Africa in the late nineteenth century. In his theory chapter he presents a hypothesis on the persistence of empire and later concludes the first section of his book with some reasons why Rome lasted as an empire longer than Spain or England. He writes, "A persistent empire presupposes imperial bureaucratic coordination and continuing transnational integration in the political, economic, and cultural spheres."¹⁰ Unfortunately, he does not expand this theoretical explanation for how an empire persists, particularly in the modern era. Instead, he concentrates on his

⁹ See Doyle, *Empires*. and Lieven, *Empire: The Russian Empire and Its Rivals*.. These authors' arguments along with my own theory of imperial persistence are summarized in Chapter 2.

¹⁰ Doyle, *Empires*.

primary task of explaining nineteenth century European colonialism and the 'Scramble for Africa'. The topic of imperial persistence is only hinted at in these discussions and never in a manner that compares the success of the various European empires in controlling their periphery.

In a less theoretical manner, Dominic Lieven offers detailed comparative descriptions of four modern empires: Ottomans, Habsburgs, Russians, and British. His goal is to compare the Russian Empire with its contemporaries. He includes specific reasons for why each of these particular empires formed, persisted, and ultimately collapsed, but he resists stipulating a common mechanism by which these empires were able to persist. From his substantial comparative analyses, however, there are some patterns that emerge for how empires persist. Lieven found that these four empires were more successful when 1) they remained undemocratic with respect to the periphery; 2) differences between the periphery and the metropole were reduced; 3) great power status was maintained. Obviously, these are broad summations of Lieven's detailed work, but the conclusions offer insights into what may be involved in integrating the periphery and metropole.

Doyle has introduced a possible hypothesis for how empires persist—it is simply underdeveloped and not fully tested. Lieven has provided examples of how different modern empires successfully maintained control of their peripheries. Together, there are many questions that are left unanswered. What does imperial bureaucratic coordination involve? Why do imperial bureaucracies and continuing

transnational integration lead to greater persistence? How do you develop transnational integration? Is one sphere of integration, “political, economic, and cultural” more important than another or all three required? What type of differences between the metropole need to be reduced and how is this accomplished? Are democracy and empire completely incompatible? These are all questions addressed in this dissertation.

1.3 Outline of the Dissertation

In this dissertation, I use process tracing to examine in depth the imperial relationships of the former Soviet Union. This includes the fifteen republics, Eastern Europe, and the autonomous regions of the Russian Socialist Federative Soviet Republic that is today know as the Russian Federation. In analyzing these three aspects of the Soviet Empire I hope to demonstrate how variations in coercion, institutions, and integration affected the persistence of the Soviet Empire and the Russian Federation today. To do so, I evaluate the Soviet Union’s ability to control the periphery over time. The first two chapters will argue that the Soviet Union acted like an empire because the Communist Party established inequitable rule over the Soviet republics and Eastern Europe. The third case study analyses the evolution of the Russian Federation is still evolving and provides an excellent case study of an empire in transition.

While it is fairly common now to refer to the Soviet Union as an empire, this perspective often results from the way it collapsed. The Soviet Union fractured into independent states along predominantly ethno-national lines, giving the perception that the Soviet Union must have been an empire because that is how empires end, especially in an age of nationalism. While there may be some truth to this observation, especially in the final months of the Soviet Union, this is a faulty way to assess the nature of the Soviet state. Instead, I will lay out a brief history of the formation of the Soviet Union to show how the behavior of the Communist Party toward the republics and autonomous regions was indeed imperial. Whether it thought of itself as an empire or was even termed an empire by other states is not as important as the way in which the Soviet Union treated its political societies. This section will show that the Soviet Union acted like an empire and should therefore be analyzed as an empire.

The Soviet Union is an ideal empire for demonstrating the plausibility of the theory presented in this dissertation for three reasons. First, the Soviet Union was a modern empire that was forged and maintained during a time when theories on nationalism and self-determination would have predicted otherwise. In fact, Lenin and Stalin acknowledged the power of nationalism and the right of self-determination and still managed to reconstitute the Russian Empire en route to forming the Soviet Union. The Soviet Union also collapsed while it had sufficient state power to maintain control over most of its periphery undermining theories that argue power is sufficient for imperial persistence.

Second, the Soviet Union was a very expansive empire that up until it collapsed controlled an ethnically diverse periphery often with competing strategies. Some republics and client states were treated more autonomously with little intent to integrate while others were inextricably linked to the Soviet center. More importantly, because Soviet policy was rarely consistent with regards to the periphery, there is variation over time in the ability of the Soviet Union to maintain control of the different peripheral societies. Finally, by testing within a single empire, I will be able to isolate intervening variables and contingent events such as domestic politics or security competition that often make comparison between empires more problematic.

The following chapter elaborates the theoretical argument. From the literature, there are recurring patterns for how empires fail and I theorize that the most persistent empires were those that established their legitimacy through institutions and integration.¹¹ In order to persist, the empire must first maintain order and predictability within the periphery, often using coercive force. In order to gain peripheral acceptance, the empire must create centralized institutions and encourage political, social, and economic integration. Acceptance of imperial rule increases as peripheral elites are allowed to participate in the governing of the periphery and eventually the empire. Further, persistent empires develop integrative ties with the

¹¹ This idea is introduced by Michael Doyle, but he fails to fully develop the concept or undertake a comparative analysis of other empires. Dominic Lieven also addresses these variables in a comparative analysis of several modern empires, but he refrains from identifying a particular theory that explains the variations in persistence.

periphery through systems of public education, bureaucratic training programs, joint military participation, and common economic systems.

The next three chapters of the dissertation constitute the empirical analysis. I examine three aspects of the Soviet Empire: the Soviet Union, the Eastern Bloc, and the Russian Federation. Chapter 3 analyzes the Soviet Union and the role of Communist Party elites in maintaining control of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics. Over time, the Soviet Union had mixed success at controlling its republics. In part, this is because practices toward the periphery were not always consistent. Whichever strategy the Communists relied on determined the effectiveness of control. Moscow's intention to integrate and allow regional political participation (even some autonomy) increased its ability to control the periphery. The use of language, culture and education were some ways the Soviet Union developed these greater ties with the republics. "All Soviet citizens were encouraged to take pride in Pushkin, for the prestige of an imperial people's high culture helps to legitimize the polity and to consolidate its people's unity."¹² Outside of the Baltics and Western Ukraine, there were few demands to separate from the Union even as late as the summer of 1991. In fact, "the open challenge to the empire came only after top party leadership decided to reform radically the political system, only when Communists themselves began a process that delegitimized the Soviet system and

¹² Lieven, *Empire: The Russian Empire and Its Rivals* 306.

allowed a political voice to the nationalist alternative.”¹³ Following the collapse of the Soviet Union, some of the republics agreed to remain loosely integrated and formed the Commonwealth of Independent States. Certainly, no longer an empire, the Russian Federation with Moscow as the core did retain some level of influence over the former Soviet republics.

The Baltics and Transcaucasia were late comers to both the original Russian Empire and the Soviet Union. Each of the countries in these regions viewed themselves as historically distinct from all the other republics which made it far more difficult for the Soviet Union to integrate. Ultimately, the Communist Party failed to establish effective institutions that could provide the necessary public goods of security and a regulated economy. Some attempts were made to politically integrate some of the region's elites, but nativization programs that emphasized the historical and cultural uniqueness of the different regions undermined these programs. Over time, these regions developed their own bureaucratic systems that were often corrupt and only responded to coercive pressure from Moscow. The population had developed few ties with the Soviet Union.

In Chapter 4, I analyze the Soviet Union and its control of Eastern Europe. Relying almost exclusively on coercion, peripheries in Eastern Europe and Asia were the most likely to resist and rebel against Moscow. When Gorbachev withdrew Soviet forces from these regions, there was no recognition of Moscow's legitimacy to

¹³ Ronald Grigor Suny, *The Revenge of the Past: Nationalism, Revolution, and the Collapse of the Soviet Union* (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 1993) 126.

rule over them. This is significantly different from the perceptions in many of the Republics and Russia in particular. The Eastern Bloc peripheries were never connected in any meaningful way with the Soviet Union. Peripheral independence was an expected response as peripheral elites sought the best way to govern their nations. Granted, the Soviet Union may never have intended to establish Soviet institutions or integrate the Eastern bloc—but that is precisely the point. Empires can only succeed for long periods of time if the metropole attempts to establish its legitimacy to rule. Otherwise, coercively maintaining the empire becomes a costly affair that eventually outweighs any benefits.

In Chapter 5, I analyze the Russian Federation. Beginning with the separation of the Russian Soviet Federated Socialist Republic from the Soviet Union, I examine the process of imperial transition. I argue that the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991 marked the end of one empire and the start of a transition for another. Given its continuing center-periphery relationships with the former Soviet republics and the new federal subjects of the federation, the Russian Federation exhibits many of the characteristics of an empire and consequently faces many of the same challenges. This is not an attempt to categorically determine or even debate whether Russia is or is not reverting back to an empire—that would yield little more than a title. Rather, I will use the theory of imperial persistence presented in this dissertation to examine the ability of the Russian Federation to persist in maintaining control of its peripheral, federal regions especially those with aspirations of independence.

Throughout its history, Russia has included different autonomous regions that were not necessarily ethnic Russian and still the empire managed to maintain control over a very vast territory. "In some areas, the tsarist regime managed to create loyal subjects through the transformation of cultural identities, but its policies were inconsistent and varied enormously."¹⁴ By the time Yeltsin claimed Russian independence from the Soviet Union, Moscow was able to retain control for the most part over many of the autonomous and ethnically different regions. My analysis shows that despite a breakdown in the federal government under Yeltsin, a significant level of transnational integration helped keep the federation together. Under Putin, centralized control is being restored, transnational integration is building, and use of coercion has become more tempered. The prospects of persistence at this point appear to be quite positive.

¹⁴ Suny, "The Empire Strikes Out", in Suny and Martin, *A State of Nations: Empire and Nation-Making in the Age of Lenin and Stalin* 56.

CHAPTER 2

THEORY OF IMPERIAL PERSISTENCE

2.1 Introduction

Empires exist when a central power establishes control over a peripheral political society. These political societies can be other states, territories, or ethno-national groups. Empires seek control of a periphery in order to gain some benefit. The benefit could be economic, political, strategic, or even ideological, but it is not always pursued with the intent of establishing an empire. Often times it is not the title, but the result that an imperial state desires. Spain and France, for example, did not consider that they were creating empires in the Americas during the 16th and 17th centuries. Rather, they established control over new territories in order to extract resources and over time that became recognized as empire.¹ Similarly, the Soviet Union did not consider that it was building an empire with regard to the Soviet

¹ For an explanation on the formation of these empires and their understanding of empire see Henry Arthur Francis Kamen, *Spain's Road to Empire: The Making of a World Power, 1492-1763* (London: Penguin, 2003). and James S. Pritchard, *In Search of Empire: The French in the Americas, 1670-1730* (Cambridge, UK; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2004).

republics and Eastern Europe. Over time, however, Soviet imposition of communism came to be recognized as an imperial affair.

An empire only persists when it continues to exert external and internal political control over the peripheral society. Control means that the empire determines foreign policy, extracts tribute or collects taxes, and influences or affects internal politics. I argue that empires maintain control of the periphery through coercion, centralized institutions, and transnational integration. Further, this chapter will show that *how* empires employ each of these methods of control affects peripheral perceptions of the empire. In the modern era, empires that continue to rely primarily on coercion experience resistance from the periphery and face increasing challenges as the periphery develops.

Increased resistance eventually takes the form of nationalist movements seeking increased autonomy and finally independence. As the periphery forms a national identity it often perceives imperial rule as detrimental to the development of its society. In the modern era, whether or not these movements demand independence is based in part on how control of the periphery is maintained. Rather than coercion, an empire must develop centralized institutions and foster transnational integration as a way to decrease resistance and increase its acceptance as a sovereign power.² As peripheral acceptance increases, the potential threat and cost of rebellion is correspondingly decreased. The more an empire relies on institutions and

² This point is based on Max Weber's conception of legitimacy. See Max Weber, Alexander Morell Henderson, and Talcott Parsons, *The Theory of Social and Economic Organization*, 1st American ed. (New York: Oxford Univ. Press, 1947).

integration to control the periphery, the more accepted the empire becomes, and in turn, the longer the empire will persist.

This chapter begins with review of the literature on nationalism. As one of the most common reasons given for why empires can no longer exist let alone persist, a basic understanding of the sources of nationalism is essential. This review will inform subsequent discussions of the theory that attempt to account for peripheral resistance and nationalist rebellion. The next section discusses the dynamics of imperial control. These dynamics not only affect how nationalism forms, but directly impacts the persistence of an empire as well. Many empires collapsed during the 20th century because maintaining control of the periphery had become too costly. When an empire is unable (or unwilling) to pay the costs of maintaining control, then the imperial relationship will collapse. I identify characteristics of empire that distinguish it from other political systems and then show how a dependence on coercion to control the periphery eventually leads to rebellion in the periphery. A significant source of this rebellion is the formation of a nationalist identity that rejects the imposed rule of the empire.

Finally, I present a theoretical argument showing that the most efficient and least costly way to achieve political control is through centralized imperial institutions and transnational integrations. Both of these processes reduce the cost of imperial control by lowering peripheral resistance and eventually creating acceptance for

continued rule by the metropole. This section ends by elaborating the characteristics of imperial bureaucratic institutions and the processes of transnational integration.

2.2 *Nationalism and Empire*

In the previous chapter I identified the potential difficulties that arise from a nationalistic periphery. Ronald Suny, in recounting the rise of nationalism in the Russian and Soviet empires, believes that the collapse of empires stems in part from the “delegitimizing power of nationalism.”³ Benedict Anderson goes even further stipulating that empire and nation are “incompatible.”⁴ In this chapter, I argue that nationalism and empire are only incompatible when the periphery begins to demand independence. Significant to this discussion is the recognition that nationalism, like empire is a category of analysis that often obscures the dynamics surrounding its formation or the way it is actually perceived by those within the group. Many times nationalism is used to describe the actions and view of a particular group, when in fact it is more accurately describing a process of identity formation.

³ Ronald Grigor Suny, “The Empire Strikes Out.” in Suny and Martin, *A State of Nations: Empire and Nation-Making in the Age of Lenin and Stalin* 33..

⁴ Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* 93.

Most discussions of nations and nationalism begin by outlining the primordialist position or what Ronald Suny refers to as the "Sleeping Beauty view."⁵ According to this view, nations are communities of like members that share common origins, history, language, religion and/or culture. As Etienne Balibar states, this understanding of nations includes, "believing that the generations which succeed one another over centuries on a reasonably stable territory, under a reasonably univocal designation, have handed down to each other an invariant substance..." and that the members of a nation are the "culmination of that process."⁶ Nations are thus natural units to which everyone belongs. They have a particular historical legacy that forms part of the community's present identity. Nationalism occurs when this Sleeping Beauty wakes up, the community attains consciousness, realizes that it has a shared language, culture, past, and destiny, and on this basis seeks political autonomy and the right to control their own territory. This is the view often articulated in nationalist rhetoric and reflected by Woodrow Wilson's and Vladimir Lenin's understanding of empire and a nation's right to self-determination.

This essentialist view of nationalism, however, has been successfully challenged by scholars who have come to understand the constructed nature of

⁵ Suny, *The Revenge of the Past: Nationalism, Revolution, and the Collapse of the Soviet Union* 3.

⁶ Etienne Balibar, "The Nation Form: History and Ideology". Geoff Eley and Ronald Grigor Suny, *Becoming National: A Reader* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1996) 132.

identities.⁷ Ernest Gellner argues that nations and nationalism are the product of state modernization efforts.⁸ In order to meet the needs of industrial society, states need to standardize the communities resulting in "mobile, literate, culturally standardized, interchangeable population."⁹ When people come to be formed into these units and identify with them, or conversely, when the "illiterate, half-starved populations sucked from their rural cultural ghettos" are put at a disadvantage by this process such that they fight for polities of their own, there one has nationalism.¹⁰ The nation is produced by the imposition of written languages and standardized cultures upon previously heterogeneous groups for the purposes of industrial modernization or to produce a political society that is able to enjoy the rewards of modernization. It is on the basis of this account that Gellner claims "it is nationalism which engenders the nation, not the other way around."¹¹ Even though the process of modernization and industrialization are instrumental to the development of a national identity, it is not clear from his account why certain national identities are selected over others.

⁷ Ernest Renan was already arguing against essentialist conceptions of nations in 1882. Ernest Renan, "What Is a Nation?" In *Ibid.* Karl Deutsch, however, was the first to find that nations are the product of historical processes, specifically the development of communications networks. Karl Wolfgang Deutsch, *Nationalism and Social Communication: An Inquiry into the Foundations of Nationality*, 2nd ed. (Cambridge, Mass.: M.I.T. Press, 1978).

⁸ Ernest Gellner, *Nations and Nationalism, New Perspectives on the Past*. (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1983).

⁹ *Ibid.* 46.

¹⁰ *Ibid.* 46-48.

¹¹ *Ibid.* 55.

At the same time, Benedict Anderson developed a theory of nationalism that is less structural, though no less modern in its perspective of the nation. According to him, the possibility of nationalism first emerged when three cultural conceptions lost their salience: the sacred nature of script languages, the organization of society around "high centers," and a cosmic notion of time.¹² More importantly, the ability to produce and sell large quantities of printed material combined with the susceptibility of language to homogenization resulted in bounded linguistic groups that shared common experiences in "homogenous empty time."¹³ Anderson posits that the first of these "imagined communities" formed in the Spanish American empire as Creole communities became "self-contained" administrative units that were excluded from Spanish imperial politics. Anderson also argues that the nation as a concept and idea became modular such that it could be "exported" or adopted by other developing societies.¹⁴ Partha Chatterjee's work on India show how these understandings of the nation framed the thinking of elites seeking to create an Indian nationalist identity.¹⁵

Moving even further away from a strictly structural explanation, Michael Hroch locates the origins of modern nationalist movements in the work of intellectuals and elites. He separates nationalist movements into three phases: Phase

¹² Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*.

¹³ Anderson describes this phenomenon as print-capitalism. Ibid. 44-46.

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ Partha Chatterjee, *Nationalist Thought and the Colonial World: A Derivative Discourse?* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1986).

A, where activist scholars seek to research, compile, and articulate a historical narrative to undergird a national group; Phase B, where political activists seek acceptance of this narrative by the masses and hope to spark initial mobilization towards national independence; and finally Phase C, where the nationalist discourse becomes widely accepted, resulting in a mass movement.¹⁶ Ronald Suny and Michael Kennedy also explore this perspective in an edited volume titled, *Intellectuals and the Articulation of the Nation*.¹⁷ The work in this volume emphasizes the contingent nature of national identities and the very real energy that intellectuals have invested in forming them.

Finally, nations are formed through the articulation of boundaries—lines of inclusion and exclusion. Athnony Marx shows how religious distinctions and violence were used by elites in England and France to generate the images of cohesion that would later form a basis for national self-understandings.¹⁸ Prasenjit Duara also investigates this process of national formation by looking at the variation in Chinese political identities over time. He uses the term “discent” to describe the process of combining historical *descent* with social *dissent* to produce a national

¹⁶ Michael Hroch, “From National Movement to the Fully Formed Nation: The Nation-Building Process in Europe.” In Eley and Suny, *Becoming National: A Reader* 63.

¹⁷ Ronald Grigor Suny and Michael D. Kennedy, *Intellectuals and the Articulation of the Nation* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1999).

¹⁸ Anthony W. Marx, *Faith in Nation: Exclusionary Origins of Nationalism* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2003).

narrative that transforms the “perception of the boundaries of the community.”¹⁹

Significantly for both of these accounts is the relationship between elites and popular unrest. National identities are formed when elites and intellectuals turn to historical narratives and capitalize on popular discontent to produce a nationalist movement. For empires, this means that peripheral discontent can become a vehicle through which intellectuals and elites can advocate for separation and independence as part of a nationalist discourse.

Based on this review of the literature, I conclude that nations are not natural or fixed communities that exist independent from peoples’ imaginings of them. Rather they are the product of specific historical developments and the articulation of specific identities by intellectuals and elites. Suny’s work on the ways in which Soviet Union created ethno-national identities in the form of titular republics reveals this process at work.²⁰ For these reasons, I argue that empires can and do affect the development of nations and nationalism and whether or not those communities pursue independence. Structurally, empires establish and reinforce boundaries that can make peripheral societies appear historically natural. Obvious geographic and social differences fuel perceptions of inequality and inferiority setting the conditions for intellectuals to articulate a separate, nationalist identity. The imposed hierarchical order of empires further develops these perceptions of inequality and distinctiveness

¹⁹ Prasenjit Duara, “Historicizing National Identity, or Who Imagines What and When.” In Eley and Suny, *Becoming National: A Reader* 168.

²⁰ Suny, *The Revenge of the Past: Nationalism, Revolution, and the Collapse of the Soviet Union*.

that can be used by intellectuals and elites to demand recognition of the rights and privileges that belong to their “historical” community. Understanding that identities are indeed constructed and subject to historical processes, persistent empires must present similar articulations so as to layer a supranational identity on top of the peripheral one. Most importantly, empires must engage peripheral elites and intellectuals in forging a supranational identity.

Michael Hroch’s phases of national development do not necessarily result in the formation of an independent nation-state. The reality today is that there are many more nations than there are nation-states; and while some are agitating for statehood, the vast majority are not. For empires, this means that nationalism in the periphery does not automatically presume the periphery will be satisfied with nothing short of independence. Stated differently, not all nationalists are separatists and not all separatists are nationalists. In fact, the following sections argue that there are particular dynamics of imperial control that affect how nationalism forms in the periphery and the extent to which nationalists pursue separation and independence.

2.3 Dynamics of Imperial Control

Conceptions and definitions of empire have varied tremendously over time. Whether it is the Roman Empire, the Persian Empire, the Soviet’s “evil” Empire, or

even the “American Empire”, few scholars or pundits have adhered to a consistent definition or understanding of empire. In his theory of empire, Michael Doyle differentiates between the statics, comparative statics, and dynamics of empire. Each perspective describes the establishment of empire, the types of imperial control, and the maintenance of empire respectively.²¹ Since this project is concerned with the maintenance or persistence of empire, this chapter begins by building upon Doyle’s understanding of the dynamics of empire.

In his analysis of empire, he finds that only two empires, the Roman (23 BC – 476 AD) and the Spanish (1515 – 1898) ever crossed the threshold to a persistent empire.²² The dynamic attributes that he identifies as contributing to this persistence of an empire are a centralized bureaucracy and continuing transnational integration with the periphery. Unfortunately, he does not fully develop or test this thesis or his conclusion about the persistence of empire. This section therefore explores the characteristics of imperial behavior in order to explain how Doyle’s two attributes affect the persistence of the empire.

²¹ Doyle, *Empires*.

²² Ibid. 323.

2.3.1 Characteristics of Empire

Michael Doyle found that an important characteristic of the metropole is “a thorough sense of public legitimacy or community, widely shared among the governing population, whether elite or mass.”²³ In the modern era, this unified sense of legitimacy often develops as part of the discourse of the nation. In an empire, as the periphery becomes more nationalized, it will seek to acquire the rights afforded other nations that are expressed under the principles of self-determination. Often, nationalism or a sense of national identity is not fully present when a periphery begins to demand political autonomy. Rather, peripheral elites, marginalized by the metropole, turn to nationalist rhetoric as a way to legitimate their position and agitate for more political power.²⁴ As peripheral societies, and in particular the elites, begin to think they will be better off apart from the empire, then a move toward political independence is more likely.

I theorize that in order for a modern empire to persist it must attempt to develop a sense of legitimacy and community throughout the empire as well. In other words, as a peripheral society becomes socially differentiated and begins to develop its own unified sense of public legitimacy, the metropole must work to develop a similar sense of legitimacy for the empire. Often this means the empire must satisfy a political, ideological, or even economic need of the periphery so that continued rule

²³ Ibid. 128-32.

²⁴ See Michael Hechter, *Containing Nationalism* (Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, 2000).; Suny, *The Revenge of the Past: Nationalism, Revolution, and the Collapse of the Soviet Union*.; Beissinger, *Nationalist Mobilization and the Collapse of the Soviet State*.

by the metropole is somehow in the interest of the periphery. In doing so, empires are often able to “solve” the nationalist problem that so often develops within an empire. This is also the process by which empires successfully transition to some type of federal or multinational state; an issue addressed specifically in Chapter 5.

In an essay on the Russian and Soviet empires, Ronald Suny concludes that empires are best understood as political relationships not necessarily of one state over another but of one political society dominating another.²⁵ This concept is also borrowed from Michael Doyle’s formulation of empires as “relationships of political control imposed by some political societies over the effective sovereignty of other political societies.” This political control can be achieved “by force, by political collaboration, by economic, social, or cultural dependence,” but a significant characteristic is “unequal” rule between the metropole (the imperial state) and the periphery (territorial possessions).²⁶ In other words, “Citizens of the nation, equal under the law, have a different relationship with their state than do subjects of empire.”²⁷ Empires differ from federations and nation-states, even ones that are multinational, because political control of the periphery is in some way inequitable. Inequality then becomes the key in the dynamics of imperial control.

²⁵ Suny, “The Empire Strikes Out”, 24

²⁶ Doyle, *Empires* 19, 36.

²⁷ Suny, “The Empire Strikes Out”, 25.

This level of inequality is also related to the amount of internal and external political control exerted by the metropole over the periphery. Using a systems approach to international relations, Adam Watson views empires and independent states existing on opposite ends of a hierarchical spectrum. A system of fully independent states is characterized by total anarchy (no hierarchy), while empire represents complete hierarchy.²⁸ As one state exerts more external and internal control over an independent state, the system shifts from hegemony, to suzerainty, to dominion, and finally to empire. Empire therefore, represents complete control over the internal and external politics of another political society. Based on this "ideal empire", some systems, such as the Roman Empire, would be considered dominions, while other systems, like the British Empire which at times exhibited considerably less internal control, should really be considered suzerainty. Included within this spectrum of political control is a sense of political inequality as one state "dominates" another.

Stephen Rosen offers a similar definition of empire yet less refined in its distinction between empire and hegemony. "Empire is the rule exercised by one nation over others to regulate their *external* behavior and to ensure minimally acceptable forms of *internal* behavior within the subordinate states (emphasis added)."²⁹ Hegemons can influence and control external behavior, but only empires

²⁸ Adam Watson, *The Evolution of International Society: A Comparative Historical Analysis* (London; New York: Routledge, 1992) 14.

²⁹ Rosen, "An Empire, If You Can Keep It," 51.

are able to control the internal politics of another state and enforce "acceptable forms" of behavior. From these descriptions, empire represents a hierarchical spectrum of political control in which the periphery lacks some aspect of sovereign independence when compared to the metropole.

Many states, including Great Britain, the Soviet Union, and even the United States are often described as informal empires. The Soviet Union's 'sphere of influence' over Eastern Europe and parts of Asia was viewed as an undeclared, informal empire.³⁰ But, when does influence move beyond normal political relations to become imperial? Michael Doyle differentiates between the two types of empire as *formal* control versus *effective* control with both essentially achieving the same results. "In formal empires resistance leads to police actions or the replacement of rebellious collaborators. In informal empires it leads to indirect constraints (threats of embargos, blockades, etc.) or to military intervention."³¹ The difference is *how* political control of the periphery is achieved. Formal political control requires bureaucracies and governing officials to proscribe rules and establish appropriate behavior for the periphery, while effective (informal) control is simply about influence. Formal empire is easy to identify, informal nearly impossible.

The degree of political control and the level of actual or perceived inequality constitute the dynamics of both formal and informal imperial rule. There is always

³⁰ Suny and Martin, *A State of Nations: Empire and Nation-Making in the Age of Lenin and Stalin*; Michael Hechter, *Internal Colonialism: The Celtic Fringe in British National Development, 1536-1966* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1975) 60-64.

³¹ Doyle, *Empires* 40.

wide variation in how and to what degree inequitable political control over the periphery is exerted even within a single empire. That characteristic of empire is useful for understanding how empires persist and possibly even transition to a different political structure. For example, when Rome extended citizenship to all of its peripheries in 212 it was still referred to as the Roman Empire, but its behavior toward the periphery was fundamentally different. A significant degree of inequality between the metropole and the periphery had been eliminated through political integration. Similarly, the unification of Germany may have been an imperial affair, but political and cultural integration quickly yielded a federal state. The Soviet Union, on the other hand, extended citizenship to all of the republics, but established a hierarchical pattern of inequality between Moscow and the republics.

Any shift in the political relationship between the metropole and the periphery means that the system has somehow changed. This dynamic of imperial rule is especially important to the development of nationalism. While empires have fallen prey to the demands of a nationalist periphery, there are cases when the periphery does not expect independence or wish to separate. Significantly, as peripheral perceptions of inequality decrease, empires are more likely to avoid creating resentment and rebellion. Conditions of inequality often provide the framework for articulating nationalist and anti-imperial expressions.³² Ultimately, the way an empire controls the periphery affects its ability to persist. As the periphery develops,

³² Marx, *Faith in Nation: Exclusionary Origins of Nationalism*.; Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*.

the empire must transition from political inequality to a constitutional hierarchy that recognizes the rights of the periphery. The dialectic of empire is that in order to continue to control or influence the periphery, empires must necessarily become something other than an empire.

Empire is a system of hierarchical political control. Typically, theories of empire argue that political control is achieved through superior power and that the relative loss of power accounts for the rise and fall of great powers and empires. Still, many empires have been able to exist or fail despite their superior relative power.³³ This is because power is primarily required to *establish* an empire, but other types of control are more important for maintaining control. The key to a persistent empire, whether formal or informal, lies in the ability of the metropole to maintain external and internal control over a peripheral society. "A successful response to peripheral resistance is a sign of effective imperialism, and effective empires control (constitute or can change) the political regime of the periphery."³⁴ The Communist Party went to great lengths to assert its control over a rebellious periphery (e.g., Hungary, 1953; Czechoslovakia, 1968; Tbilisi, 1989) and was effective in changing political regimes throughout its peripheries. In fact, I theorize that there are three ways empires

³³ Some modern examples would include the Ottoman Empire which was an extremely weakened power in the period leading up to World War I, yet still exerted political control over a significant portion of its empire. On the other hand, the British Empire or the Soviet Union retained considerable material power with respect to their peripheries, yet were unable to maintain control of their peripheries.

³⁴ Doyle, *Empires* 40.

maintain control over their peripheries: coercion, centralized institutions, and transnational integration.

2.3.2 Coercive Imperial Control

Coercion is the most recognizable form of imperial control, but also the most costly. This is a difference however between coercive force, and the legitimate use of force to maintain the peace. All systems of governance rely on some form of police or security force to maintain law and order. In fact, this is a primary function of the modern state and its bureaucracy and essential to maintaining the stability and predictability of society. Within an empire, however, coercion is the use of force, or the threatened use of force, to specifically stop or prevent rebellion or mass demonstrations against the empire. This use of force is primarily military or paramilitary in nature and usually takes the form of an occupying army. In the case of the Soviet Union, the police-state structure primarily constructed under Stalin typifies the Communist Party's use of coercion to control the periphery. At times the Red Army was used to stop protests, while at others, the NKVD and later the KGB were used to repress the population and keep the periphery from rebelling. "More often, proactive measures were taken by the KGB to prevent demonstrations before

they occurred by detaining or harassing organizers, particularly in cases of demonstrations which regularly took place on symbolic dates.”³⁵

Michael Doyle argues that metropolises rely on superior political power to control a peripheral society. This hierarchical relationship is possible because the metropole is socially differentiated and politically integrated while the periphery is at the very least politically divided.³⁶ This static model or ‘sociology of empire’ is certainly plausible for explaining how empires are formed, but it does not explain how empires maintain their superior political power. Instead, the model implies that the more socially differentiated and politically integrated a peripheral society becomes, the less likely it can be controlled by the metropole. Accordingly, as empires develop their peripheries to establish order and extract resources, they begin to create socially differentiated societies. The peripheral society then becomes politically mobilized as a result of unequal rule by the metropole and begins to resist imperial control.³⁷ Therefore, only empires with socially under-developed and politically divided peripheral societies will be able to persist.

The implication for persistence is that coercive strategies that keep the society fractured and subdued should work best as a way for an empire to maintain control over the peripheries. In fact, Peter Liberman demonstrates quite persuasively that

³⁵ Beissinger, *Nationalist Mobilization and the Collapse of the Soviet State* 332.

³⁶ Doyle, *Empires* 129.

³⁷ This parallels arguments in the nationalism literature to explain why empire and nation are incompatible. See Anderson, *Imagined Communities*, and Suny, “The Empire Strikes Out”.

there are many examples of when “the conqueror’s capability and resolve to inflict harm increases collaboration and the profitability of conquest and empire.”³⁸ He feels the primary obstacle to exploiting industrial societies is nationalism and that coercion and repression are effective methods for effectively dealing with this threat. “When conquerors threaten public goods such as national treasures, public buildings, transportation services, or other shared economic, social and moral values, collaboration is often the lesser evil for the nation as a whole.”³⁹ Unfortunately, the cases that Liberman selects only prove that these techniques can be used to forcefully control an empire for short periods of time.⁴⁰ This classic view of imperial control is illustrated in Figure 2.1.

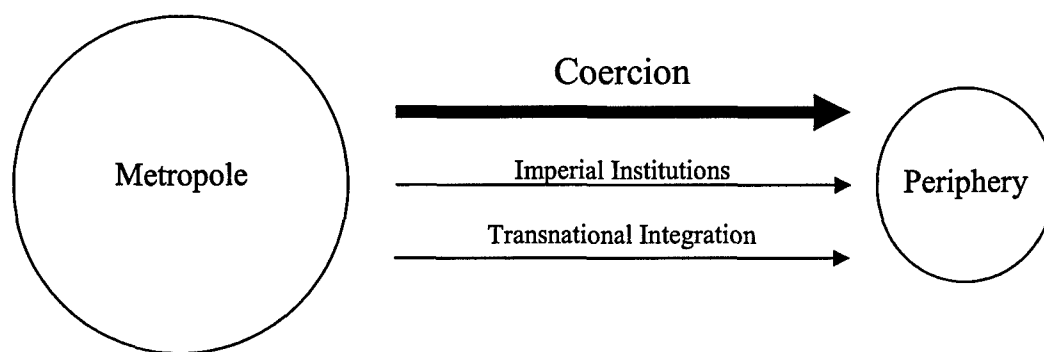


Figure 2.1 Classic View of Imperial Control

³⁸ Peter Liberman, *Does Conquest Pay? The Exploitation of Occupied Industrial Societies*, *Princeton Studies in International History and Politics* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1996) 23.

³⁹ *Ibid.* 21.

⁴⁰ Liberman defends the short lifespan of these empires by blaming their collapse on the international system. He concludes that it was not nationalism or some mobilization of “people power”, but the international system that exerted external pressures on the empire and resulted in its collapse. *Ibid.* 144.

What Liberman overlooks is the fact that in all of his cases domestic institutions remained intact following conquest and they were primarily responsible for stabilizing and ordering the peripheral society.

Even if coercion and repression work to keep nationalistic industrial societies “atomized and passive”, these techniques do not contribute to long term persistence. Crushing a rebellion or instituting marshal law may work for a period, but there are costs to doing so. Despite the short term loss of blood and treasure, coercion also tends to build long term resentment within the periphery. This is because coercion fails to address underlying grievances that led to rebellion or resistance in the first place. Coercion also reinforces the perception of inequality and accentuates differences between the metropole and the periphery. Finally, there are plenty of examples from the 20th century where imperial force proved ineffective and too costly to stem the rise of nationalistic aspirations. The Ottoman genocide of the Armenians, France’s brutal conflicts with Vietnam and Algeria, Britain’s heavy handed rule of Egypt, are examples of hard, coercive power failing to stop the rise of nationalism. In the modern era, nationalistic peripheries have increasingly acquired capabilities and developed strategies of resistance that made the continuance of empire for too costly for the metropole.⁴¹ Indeed, rather than undermine nationalism, coercion and repression are more likely to agitate and increase nationalist revolts or independence movements over time.

⁴¹ Ivan Arrequin-Toft, "How the Weak Win Wars: A Theory of Asymmetric Conflict," *International Security* 26, no. 1 (2001).

Brutalized repression has proven ineffective in completely eliminating opposition to the empire. Particularly in the modern era of advanced communication, even a “peace of Carthage” has the potential to generate backlash elsewhere in the empire. For that reason, coercion has to be measured and precise. Often, empires will need to resort to coercion to reestablish control of a rebellious section of the empire. To be recognized as legitimate and therefore accepted by the periphery, the use of coercion can not be arbitrary or excessive. Rather than crush a rebellion, the empire must be interested in diffusing the rebellion. Rather than slaughter a group of protesters, the empire must address grievances through political processes. For this reason, establishing legal procedures and building centralized bureaucratic institutions is extremely important to the persistence of an empire.

An extreme level of coercion was demonstrated by the actions of the Athenians against Melos, Ottoman genocide of Armenians, or the purges that occurred under Stalin during the 1930s. The Athenians learned that massacres only solve an immediate problem of control and ultimately experienced increased rejection of imperial rule throughout the remaining parts of the empire.⁴² Stalin recklessly purged government officials, party leaders, and military members that ultimately resulted in a system of terror throughout the entire empire. Without a doubt this

⁴² Thucydides, Robert B. Strassler, and Richard Crawley, *The Landmark Thucydides: A Comprehensive Guide to the Peloponnesian War*, 1st Touchstone ed. (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1998).

period of history irrevocably affected the persistence of the empire. Extreme levels of coercion are not sustainable primarily because it undermines the viability of society.

For example, the Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia in 1968 was in response to a “counter revolution” that was perceived as a threat to international socialism. In reality, the protests were principally over poor economic conditions in the country and not about achieving independence. Czechoslovakian leaders were not interested in distancing the country from the Soviet Union except to gain better economic conditions. Leonid Brezhnev, however, viewed any challenges to the Soviet model of economics as a direct challenge to the socialist empire. Rather than use existing institutions such as the Council of Mutual Economic Assistance (CMEA) to arrive at some solution to Czechoslovakia’s economic problems, the Soviet Union immediately moved to stomp down dissent. The invasion would stigmatize the entire empire and later Soviet leaders would hesitate to use force precisely because of the Prague Spring.⁴³

This does not mean that empires will never have to apply high levels of force to prevent a periphery from breaking away. The key is to be judicious and restrained when applying force. Retaining or reestablishing control will sometimes require the use of coercion, but gaining the acceptance of the periphery will depend on perceptions of the use of that force. Fear and repression offer only temporary gains and if continued will undermine long term persistence. When Rome conquered a

⁴³ Beissinger, *Nationalist Mobilization and the Collapse of the Soviet State*.

territory, the Emperor would quickly establish a proconsul and a network of bureaucratic officials that worked to incorporate the new territory into the empire. The roads leading to Rome were not simply paved in blood and stone—they were also forged with bureaucratic and transnational ties.

According to Weber “the use of force is regarded as legitimate only so far as it is either permitted by the state or prescribed by it.”⁴⁴ The state retains the right to use force because that right has been recognized by the citizens of the state. Just as the right of a father to discipline his children is recognized, so too the right of a state to use force to regulate society must be acknowledge its citizenry. And just like a parent, if the use of force by the state to discipline its society becomes abusive, then that power will be resented and possibly even overthrown. For empires, the use of force must be confined to restoring order and reinforcing the political hierarchy not protecting the regime’s status or the superiority of the metropole. The use of force in Hungary, Czechoslovakia, and even in many of the Soviet republics came to be associated with the maintenance of the Communist regime, rather than the reestablishment of order. The Soviet republics and Eastern Europe were often more interested in gaining greater autonomy or political rights, than breaking away from the Soviet Union.

As long as force is used as part of a prescribed role of the state, then it is more likely to be accepted by the periphery. For example, most citizens expect to be

⁴⁴ Weber, Henderson, and Parsons, *The Theory of Social and Economic Organization* 156.

imprisoned or jailed for committing a crime. They even expect that police or security forces will use force while protecting the state from criminals. As part of the dynamic of empire, the metropole must increasingly rely on institutions, socialization, and political processes rather than force to control dissent and political opposition. Even under Gorbachev, the Soviet Union often acted out of fear that the periphery was somehow trying to break away. Soviet leaders believed that dissent was “incompatible with the optimum functioning, and ultimately, the very existence of their type of political system.”⁴⁵ Rather than address the economic or social condition that was generating the dissent, the Communist Party perceived any type of criticism as a threat that could only be countered with coercion. When the state steps outside of the expectations of the population and continuously relies on force to put down dissent or opposition then the use of force becomes detrimental to the persistence of the empire. For example, following Stalin’s death, the government began to prosecute people only for things they had actually done rather than “jailing and killing completely innocent people by the hundreds of thousands year after year.”⁴⁶

Doyle, however, purposely downplays the role of coercive power in explaining the rise and fall of empires because material capabilities alone fail to explain Europe’s ability to control vast amounts of territory and large populations of people during the 19th century. Material power is useful for explaining conflicts

⁴⁵ Rudolf L. Tökés, *Dissent in the USSR: Politics, Ideology, and People* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1975) 92.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.* 91.

between metropolises or empires, but historically it is not the determinative condition of empire.⁴⁷ This is because peripheral societies are often controlled with more than simply coercive power. Conclusions from Lieven's comparative survey of empires highlight the role of institutions and integration for controlling the empire. His work shows that not only are empires required to provide security and order, but they must also forge political, social, and economic ties with the periphery. In fact, the most persistent empires were those that were able to effectively transition from reliance on purely coercive measures to more egalitarian political control. If the goal of the empire is to maintain control of a particular periphery, then the most efficient means of control is for the empire to gain peripheral acceptance. The more an empire must rely on coercion or patronage to control the periphery, the more costly empire becomes.

Hypothesis 1: *The more coercive the empire, the more likely the periphery will reject imperial rule.*

Corollary: Excessive use of coercive force will decrease peripheral acceptance of the metropole and increase the likelihood that independence movements will develop.

2.3.3 Other Types of Control

For this reason, all states and empires strive for some level of legitimacy as the most efficient mechanism for maintaining control of a society. States pursue

⁴⁷ Doyle, *Empires* 128.

internal and external legitimacy because it is a more efficient way to control the population and protect it from invasion. "Legitimacy is the acceptance of authority, the right of a rule or ruler to be obeyed, as distinguished from the power to coerce. It is determined by the attitudes of those who obey an authority."⁴⁸ Internally, this means that citizens of the state or those ruled by an empire accept that the current system of government has the right to control their society through the establishment of laws and institutions. Rather than rely on costly programs to suppress and control the population, empires can then allocate precious material resources to growth and development. Empires will persist for longer periods of time if the periphery accepts the metropole as the ruling authority. Coercion alone creates resentment in the periphery and does not lead to a persistent empire.

Instead, I argue that empires must also build centralized institutions and foster transnational integration in order to gain acceptance from the periphery. Through institutions and increasing transnational integration, empires decrease the costs associated with maintaining control over a rebellious or resistant periphery. Institutions are the bureaucratic structures that empires put in place in order to provide security, regulate the economy, and ensure the overall well-being of society. Creating a rational, legal system is a necessary first step toward establishing a persistent empire because this introduces order and predictability to the empire. Transnational integration is an economic, social and political process whereby the periphery and the empire strengthen their ties with one another. Significantly, the

⁴⁸ Watson, *The Evolution of International Society: A Comparative Historical Analysis* 17.

empire must ensure that as the periphery develops, peripheral elites are given meaningful positions in the imperial bureaucracy. Together these two processes—centralized institutions and transnational integration—transform coercive force into legitimate rule and lead to a more persistent empire.

Nearly all modern empires ended through peripheral secession when either the institutions failed or the empire failed to (or chose not to) fully integrate the periphery into the empire. Doyle found that neither the English nor Spanish Empire lasted as long as the Roman Empire because they never achieved the level of transnational integration necessary for the persistence of empire. He identifies this lack of integration as the “seeds of dissolution of modern empires”, but I believe it also explains the variation in how empires persist. Potentially the most important factor for an empire to persist is a strong central government whose focus is maintaining the empire, not simply the metropole. “The metropole has to be capable of reaching concerted policy decisions and of mobilizing the resources that imperial policies call for.”⁴⁹ The empire must establish institutions which function to eliminate uncertainty and create stability within the empire particularly after conquest or war.⁵⁰ In addition, institutions reduce uncertainty for the periphery through economic regulation. The more the periphery and metropole can engage in regulated and predictable economic exchange, the more stable the empire becomes.

⁴⁹ Doyle, *Empires* 129.

⁵⁰ Bernard S. Silberman, *Cages of Reason: The Rise of the Rational State in France, Japan, the United States, and Great Britain* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1993) 34-47.

Modern empires also persist by satisfying peripheral demands for political recognition.⁵¹ The previous review of nationalism highlighted the importance of elites in constructing a national identity. When elites are excluded from the political processes of the empire, they often adopt nationalist agendas in order to increase personal political power and gain recognition within the periphery. The most persistent empires establish procedures for peripheral elites to participate in the political process of empire such that they are not compelled to turn to nationalist support or rely on nationalist rhetoric in order to gain political recognition. When local leaders are offered meaningful, substantial positions in the central government, they are politically integrated and become committed to the maintenance of the empire.⁵² The more peripheral elites are included in the political process, the more integrated the empire becomes and the more legitimate the empire as ruling institution becomes.

A persistent empire must also engage in transnational integration with the periphery socially, politically, economically. This is accomplished with institutions such as universities, schools, the military, the bureaucracy, and by encouraging economic cooperation and common markets. These programs constitute a socialization process that shapes the perceptions and attitudes of those in the periphery. The Ottomans relied on the *Devshirme* to train bureaucrats and officials for service in the empire while the Soviets relied on the military, the *Komosol* and

⁵¹ Hechter, *Containing Nationalism* 29.

⁵² Ibid. 141.

party education programs to socialize people into a communist and Soviet system.

Figure 2.2 graphically depicts the importance of coercion, institutions, and integration in a persistent empire and the bi-directional nature of the relationship.

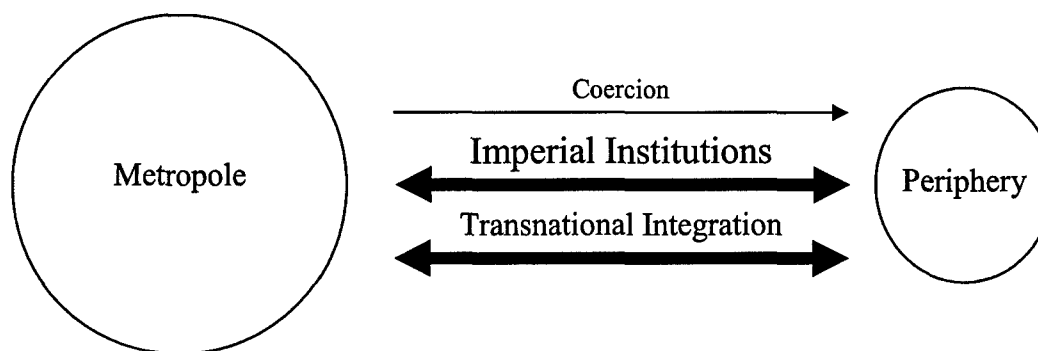


Figure 2.2 Methods of Persistent Control

2.4 Characteristics of Persistent Control

Some scholars believe that educating and developing the periphery actually undermines the ability of the empire to maintain control. In fact, this dilemma of empire is one of the reasons colonial empires were overcome by nationalism. As the periphery develops, it also acquires the ability to govern itself and begins to rebel against imperial domination.⁵³ In contrast, I have found this dilemma to be an imperial dialectic. The most persistent empires provided opportunities for newly educated and trained elites to participate in all aspects of governing and maintaining

⁵³ Both Michael Doyle and Ron Suny believe that “developmentalism” often undermines the very reason for empire and leads to a rebellious periphery. See Suny, “The Empire Strikes Out.”, 31.

the empire. Further, empires must decrease their reliance on coercion enough to gain peripheral acceptance, but not so much that they lose the ability to put down revolts. On the surface this has the appearance of increasing the autonomy of the periphery and consequently decreasing imperial control. In reality, greater elite participation increases ties with the periphery and makes imperial control more acceptable to the periphery. The key is to retain the centralized institutions that form the vertical links between the metropole and the periphery. Without these institutions, the increased autonomy becomes precisely what empires fear—independence and separation.

2.4.1 Imperial Bureaucracy

The importance of a strong, centralized bureaucracy for any state, particularly a multinational empire, is easily illustrated by the failure of the American Continental Congress. During Shays' rebellion in 1786, the States recognized that the Congress was unable to protect interstate commerce or individual rights, thus there was an urgent need to strengthen the central government. The result was a new constitution that vested greater power and authority in a central, federal government. A more contemporary example is found in the European Union. While certainly not a state, the EU is realizing the benefits of a more centralized government and continues to move steadily toward more centralized power. The European Parliament and the proposed European constitution recall the efforts of the Continental Congress to establish a more effective central government and consequently a stronger Union.

Where rational-legal authority involves an organized administrative staff, according to Weber it takes the form of a 'bureaucratic' structure. Bureaucracy in this sense, Weber says, is by far the most efficient instrument of large-scale administration which has ever been developed and the modern social order in many different spheres has become overwhelmingly dependent upon it.⁵⁴ Similarly, whether or not an empire persists depends on the establishment of a strong imperial bureaucracy. Previous studies of state political structures from 1800 to present have concluded that "the most durable polities were ones that had undergone a number of minor or gradual changes in authority characteristics" and that "polities which had internally consistent democratic or autocratic traits tended to be more durable than polities characterized by mixed authority traits."⁵⁵ In other words, strong imperial institutions are characterized by stable patterns of authority and leadership succession, with a centralized authority capable of extending control over the entire empire.

2.4.1.1 Concentration of Power

Imperial powers are continually threatened by disparate internal as well as external forces, and must have at their disposal the means and ability to put down resistance quickly. Concentration is a measure of imperial power based on the

⁵⁴ Talcott Parsons, in Weber, Henderson, and Parsons, *The Theory of Social and Economic Organization* 59.

⁵⁵ Gurr, *Polity II Codebook*, 35.

institutional characteristics of the empire. Institutional power is least where political competition is divisive and unregulated, where political authority is dispersed among different individuals and institutions, and where peripheral regions have autonomy from central authority. While the highest concentrations of institutional power are to be found in highly autocratic polities, high concentrations of power are also not uncommon among modern democracies. Operationally, this variable captures the extent of institutionalized constraints on the decision-making powers of chief executives, whether individuals or collectivities. Limitations may be imposed by accountability groups, such as legislatures in Western democracies. Other kinds of accountability groups are the ruling party in a one-party state, councils of nobles or powerful advisors in monarchies, the military in coup-prone polities, and in many states a strong, independent judiciary. In other words, empires with high concentrations of power have institutions where the executive has few constraints placed on his decisions and retains most of the decision-making power. A high concentration of power means the imperial bureaucracy has the ability to establish and enforce imperial policy. A strong central authority can also marshal all of the empire's resources to provide those goods essential to the preservation of the empire particularly during a time of crisis.

For many empires, a lack of succession rule resulted in a weakening of the central powers. This is because competition for power lead to a less than unified executive office. More importantly, as the metropole struggles to reunify the executive position, the periphery experience some lack of direction and moments of

confusion from the top. For a time, the periphery is free to establish its own direction and policy that may not ultimately be in congruence with the empire. The Ottoman Empire was especially plagued by erratic rule of the periphery whenever a sultan died. The process of election was literally a duel to the death for the sultan's heir that left the executive bureaucracy unstable, disillusioned, and only interested in protecting their interests. This was not much different from the leadership succession that occurred in the Soviet Union. Each new general secretary was in competition for the top party position, but who actually ruled the Soviet Union was never completely clear.

2.4.1.2 Scope of power

Scope is a continuum which refers to the extent to which all levels of government combined—national, regional, and local—attempt to regulate and organize the economic and social life of the citizens and subjects of the state.⁵⁶ It also refers to the ability of the imperial bureaucracy to manage the empire beyond the metropole. Michael Doyle refers to this as the Augustan threshold where bureaucratic and military reorganizations instituted under the emperor Augustus placed the empire's interests ahead of any specifically Roman demands.⁵⁷

⁵⁶ SCOPE is the operational value of Directiveness applied to the state. Harry Eckstein and Ted Robert Gurr, *Patterns of Authority: A Structural Basis for Political Inquiry*. (New York: Wiley, 1975), 53.

⁵⁷ Doyle, *Empires* 93..

Operationally, the Soviet Union (empire) during Stalin's rule and China during the Cultural Revolution define the totalitarian end of the continuum. The State and Party during these periods attempted to direct or regulate virtually every aspect of social interaction, material production, distribution, and consumption. At the other end of the spectrum, the minimal state is one in which government functions are limited to such core functions as maintenance of the ruler's authority and dispute resolution. Further, these activities may only be carried out in the core regions of the national territory. "The minimal state is typified by virtually all European states before the 1870s, by Ethiopia and Pakistan before the 1960s, and by Nepal before the 1970s."⁵⁸ The greater the scope of power of an empire, the more the empire is able to create a regulated and stable society. There is tension, however, with the extent to which coercion is used to extend the scope of control. While sometimes necessary, there must be an effort to codify or institutionalize the central authorities scope of power.

2.4.1.3 Coherence of political institutions

The final aspect of imperial institutions concerns the level of internal consistency within the organizational structure. Harry Eckstein proposed that polities with coherent (internally consistent) authority patterns should outperform and outlast

⁵⁸ Gurr, *Polity II Codebook*, 37.

those with incoherent patterns.⁵⁹ An incoherent imperial bureaucracy is characterized by inconsistent succession patterns and vastly different political structures throughout the empire. For example, as the Ottoman Bureaucracy failed, the peripheries were allowed to construct their own political structures that were no longer connected or tied to the central authority. In describing the collapse of the Habsburg and Ottoman Empires, Solomon Wank found that, "The absence of any coherent internal purpose and the failure to create a common identity eroded the legitimacy of [the empire] and created a vacuum that was eventually filled by new nationalisms."⁶⁰ The logic is rather straightforward—incoherent bureaucracies are ill equipped to handle the complex functions of managing a state, let alone establish transnational integration throughout the empire.

2.4.1.4 Transparency and Predictability

Based on the above characteristics of a strong imperial bureaucracy it is easy to conclude that empires are sustained simply with hard coercive power. Institutions, however, signal the periphery that the metropole is willing to constrain some of is

⁵⁹ Research by Ted Gurr and Mark Lichbach using the POLITY I data set indicator of Coherence generally supported this thesis. Ted Gurr, "Persistence and Change in Political Systems, 1800-1971" *American Political Science Review* 68 (December): 1482-1504. See also Mark Irving Lichbach. *Regime Change and the Coherence of European Governments* (Denver: Graduate School of International Studies, Monograph Series in World Affairs, Vol. 21, Book 1)

⁶⁰ Solomon Wank, "Disintegration of the Habsburg and Ottoman Empires," in Karen Dawisha and Bruce Parrott, *The End of Empire? The Transformation of the USSR in Comparative Perspective* (Armonk, N.Y.: M.E. Sharpe, 1997) 98.

power by including the periphery in the decision making process.⁶¹ Institutions also provide a level of transparency that removes some of the uncertainty the periphery may experience from imperial rule. Alexander Thompson argues very effectively that powerful states are often willing to “channel” their coercion through an international organization precisely because this reduces their political costs.⁶²

The primary purpose of the imperial bureaucracy is not to crush rebellions or rule with an iron fist, but to eliminate uncertainty by creating patterns of predictability about what outcomes follow from actions or choices.⁶³ This can be accomplished in numerous ways, but the most persistent empires rely on some type of traditional or legal-rational bureaucratic institutions to create laws and systems of justice. These systems give rise to greater persistence because they form the basis of legitimacy for imperial control.⁶⁴ This is not a matter of fairness or equality, but of predictability. Bureaucracies establish legitimacy for the empire by creating rules and institutions that make interaction between the metropole and the periphery more predictable. “If power stems from the barrels of guns, legitimacy must surely sprout from the more mundane but equally important books of rules which keep daily life from being an

⁶¹ G. John Ikenberry, *After Victory: Institutions, Strategic Restraint, and the Rebuilding of Order after Major Wars*, *Princeton Studies in International History and Politics* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2001).

⁶² Alexander Sackett Thompson, “Channeling Power: International Organizations and the Politics of Coercion” (Thesis Ph D --University of Chicago Dept of Political Science December 2001, 2001).

⁶³ Silberman, *Cages of Reason: The Rise of the Rational State in France, Japan, the United States, and Great Britain* 34.

⁶⁴ Weber, Henderson, and Parsons, *The Theory of Social and Economic Organization* 132.

exercise in arbitrariness.”⁶⁵ One of the strengths of the Ottoman Empire stemmed from its ability to establish order even in the non-Islamic peripheries. Even though there was a definite level of inequality, the non-Islamic population generally accepted or acquiesced to continued Ottoman rule. It is precisely because rules and institutions define and often constrain the power of the metropole that the empire becomes acceptable to the periphery.

Hypothesis 2: The more effective the imperial institutions, the more likely the periphery will accept continued imperial rule.

2.4.2 Transnational Integration

All modern empires are sustained through the strength of the imperial bureaucracy. In order for the empire to counter the rise of nationalism, however, the bureaucracy must engage the periphery in strategies of integration. Creating a rational, legal system is a necessary first step toward establishing a persistent empire, because this introduces order and predictability to the empire. The bureaucracy must then begin to integrate the periphery into the rest of the empire in order to develop a supra-national identity. Specifically, an education system must be established that

⁶⁵ Silberman, *Cages of Reason: The Rise of the Rational State in France, Japan, the United States, and Great Britain* 49.

begins to socialize the periphery into the empire and elites within the periphery must be given an opportunity to participate in the political process.

2.4.2.1 Socialization

As a result of economic interdependence, transnational actors, nationalism in weak states, the spread of technology, and changing political issues Joseph Nye believes that power has become more diffuse. Correspondingly, he describes an aspect of power that he calls co-optive or soft power where states get other states to *want* what they want.

If a state can make its power seem legitimate in the eyes of others, it will encounter less resistance to its wishes. If its culture and ideology are attractive, others will more willingly follow. If it can establish international norms consistent with its society, it is less likely to have to change. If it can support institutions that make other states wish to channel limit their activities in ways the dominant state prefers, it may be spared the costly exercise of coercive or hard power.⁶⁶

Nye's concern is that the diffusion of power is giving the impression that American power is in decline, but his concept is also useful for understanding one of the strategies of integration. In order to reduce the financial burden of continuously relying on military or coercive power, persistent empires use soft power to maintain control over their peripheries. "While military force remains the ultimate form of power in a self-help system, the use of force has become more costly for modern

⁶⁶ Joseph S. Nye, "Soft Power," *Foreign Policy*, no. 80 (1990).

great powers than it was in earlier centuries.”⁶⁷ This is particularly true when attempting to rule over another political society for any length of time.

As a potential strategy for using soft power, John Ikenberry and Charles Kupchan introduce the concept of socialization. This process works at the level of substantive beliefs rather than material payoffs where power is “exercised through a process of socialization in which the norms and value orientations of leaders in secondary states change and more closely reflect those of the dominant state.”⁶⁸ Instead of relying simply on the coercive power of material forces, they argue that imperial powers are far more effective and efficient if they can socialize the periphery into the empire. Even more importantly, “The socialization of elites into the hegemonic order leads to a consolidation of hegemonic power; rule based on might is enhanced by rule based on right.”⁶⁹ A system of rules and justice establishes the first level of legitimacy for the empire; socialization extends the process by enhancing the acceptance of the metropolitan society.

Ikenberry and Kupchan illustrate the effectiveness of this imperial strategy by showing how divergent British imperial practices toward two of its peripheries, India and Egypt, resulted in radically different outcomes. “While the principal goal of the British was to govern India effectively and allow for lucrative trade with the

⁶⁷ Ibid.: 157.

⁶⁸ G. John Ikenberry and Charles A. Kupchan, “Socialization and Hegemonic Power,” *International Organization* 44, no. 3 (1990): 285.

⁶⁹ Ibid.: 286.

metropole, it was clear that British intentions went far beyond efficient administration.”⁷⁰ Instead of relying merely on material coercion and repressive techniques, Britain had as its aim the integration of India into the British Empire, at least partially. In stark contrast, Ikenberry and Kupchan describe how the British viewed Egypt as merely a strategic asset that was needed to guard the Suez Canal and the route to India. The British attempted to rule Egypt through “unadorned coercion and inducement” seeking to “co-opt the traditional ruling elite by either forcing or inducing them to serve as peripheral collaborators.”⁷¹ While rule in both India and Egypt ended as a result of separatist nationalists, the British enjoyed a much longer, more peaceful, and less costly experience of empire in India. “Socialization affects the nature, the costs, and the longevity of the interactions that shape hegemonic systems. In particular, socialization leads to the legitimization of hegemonic power in a way that allows international order to be maintained without the constant threat of coercion.”⁷²

The most effective methods for socializing the periphery into the empire are ideology, education, and training. Education systems have varied widely across empires, but they all accomplish a similar task—inclusion of the masses and the elites in the building up of the state. An education system is required to train and develop future bureaucrats for the empire and it is part of the socialization process that shapes

⁷⁰ Ibid.: 308.

⁷¹ Ibid.: 313.

⁷² Ibid.: 315.

the perceptions and attitudes of those in the periphery. The Ottomans relied on the *Devshirme* to train bureaucrats and officials for service in empire and the Soviets used several different programs to socialize people into the Communist Party. Even more importantly, education and training lead to the development and growth of the periphery so that it is better able to contribute to the empire. In many cases, the type of education system is determined by the particular customs or religious practices found in the periphery, but the ultimate goal is to develop the periphery and instill a sense of belonging to empire. Some scholars believe that educating and developing the periphery is one of the reasons colonial empires were overcome by nationalism.⁷³ As the periphery develops, it also acquires the ability to govern itself and begins to rebel against imperial domination. For that reason, persistent empires also attempt to integrate the periphery into the political processes of the imperial bureaucracy.

2.4.2.2 Political Participation

As mentioned earlier, many theories of nationalism highlight the importance of elites in creating a national identity.⁷⁴ For an empire, this goes beyond the idea that elites are simply part of the discourse of the nation to include the particular role

⁷³ Both Michael Doyle and Ron Suny believe that "developmentalism" often undermines the very reason for empire. See Suny, "The Empire Strikes Out.", 31.

⁷⁴ Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism.*; Eley and Suny, *Becoming National: A Reader.*; Suny and Kennedy, *Intellectuals and the Articulation of the Nation.*

elites play in the development of national movements.⁷⁵ If elites are excluded from the political processes of the empire, they must then adopt nationalist agendas in order to achieve political power or gain recognition. Persistent empires establish procedures for elites to participate in the political process such that they are not compelled to develop nationalist support or rely on nationalist rhetoric in order to gain political recognition. The more peripheral elites are included in the political process, the more integrated the empire becomes and the more legitimate the empire as ruling institution becomes.

For Benedict Anderson, colonial empires in particular create the conditions for nationalism by isolating certain cultural, ethnic, or even political groups from the metropole. Paralleling Doyle's description for why England and Spain were not able to persist as long as Rome, Anderson found that of the 170 viceroys in Spanish America prior to 1813, only 4 were Creoles.

These figures are all the more startling if we note that in 1800 less than 5% of the 3,200,000 creole 'whites' in the Western Empire (imposed on about 13,700,000 indigenes) were Spain-born Spaniards. On the eve of the revolution in Mexico, there was only one creole bishop, although creoles in the viceroyalty outnumbered peninsulares by 70 to 1. And, needless to say, it was nearly unheard-of for a creole to rise to a position of official importance in Spain.⁷⁶

⁷⁵ As mentioned earlier, Michel Hroch actually breaks down the development of nationalism into several phases all of which require the active work by intellectuals and elites. See "From National Movement to the Fully Formed Nation." In Eley and Suny, *Becoming National: A Reader* 63.

⁷⁶ Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* 56.

The failure to integrate Creoles, and later, indigenous populations, gave rise to a colonial nationalism that ultimately resulted in the periphery fighting for independence.

Michael Hechter proposes that the solution for nationalistic conflict within multi-national polities is to decentralize power through indirect rule—some form of federation, confederation, or consociationalism. The idea is to appease nationalists' desire for sovereignty by divesting more political control to the periphery.⁷⁷ Unfortunately, this appears to conflict with the earlier requirement to maintain a strong, centralized imperial bureaucracy. The difficulty is in knowing how much and what type of political power to yield. Hechter, as well as Doyle and many other scholars of empire, recognize that too much decentralization will fragment the state and increase the likelihood that the periphery will seek independence. In conjunction with the education system, the goal is not to cede all political power to the periphery, but rather to incorporate the periphery in the political process. The seeds of a nationalist movement are often found among the disenfranchised elite of the periphery.

For that reason, local leaders should be offered meaningful, substantial positions in the central government. In this way nationalist leaders are politically integrated into the empire and become committed to the maintenance of the central

⁷⁷ Hechter, *Containing Nationalism* 136-56.

imperial power.⁷⁸ Similarly, Doyle found that the most effective way for Rome to contain conflict and maintain order was to incorporate peripheral leaders in the central government. Even though nationalism is a modern construct, Rome did have to manage diverse cultures and ethnicities which may be considered elements of nationalism or even a type of nationalist identity.⁷⁹ Hechter's interpretation of why nationalism was not a problem for the Roman Empire is that technology and communication did not permit anything other than indirect rule. "Nationalism is only likely to come on to the historical stage with the rise of direct rule."⁸⁰ Indirect rule as a type of imperial bureaucracy works well in stable, culturally similar peripheries, but may not be possible in unstable, developing nations.

While the imperial goal may be to transition to indirect rule to alleviate costs and future conflicts, the reality is that some nations may first require significant development or reconstruction before that is possible. How those tasks are accomplished will determine if the empire fragments or transitions to autonomous and more egalitarian rule. As the periphery develops and becomes more educated the elites and the masses must be encouraged to participate in the political process. In order to counter the competing objectives of the empire and peripheral development,

⁷⁸ Ibid. 141.

⁷⁹ Anthony Smith introduces the term "ethnies" to describe the groups that provide the basis for nationalism while Duara believes that political societies based on culture existed before the discourse of nationalism. See Anthony Smith, "The Origins of Nations," 110; and Prasenjit Duara, "Historicizing National Identity, or Who Imagines What and When" in Eley and Suny, *Becoming National: A Reader*.

⁸⁰ Hechter, *Containing Nationalism* 29.

the periphery must be granted limited autonomy while the bureaucracy continues to incorporate elites in the imperial political process. In other words, the most persistent empires have created education and training systems that encourage increasing political participation.

Hypothesis 3: *The greater imperial integration, the more likely the periphery will accept imperial rule.*

Corollary: Peripheral elites included in the political process of empire will be more supportive or tolerant of imperial policy.

Corollary: Peripheries that participate in imperial training and education will more likely accept or tolerate the empire.

2.4.3 Causal Mechanism

A strong imperial bureaucracy and increasing transnational integration leads to greater persistence because they create legitimacy or acceptance for continued control from the metropole. This is not an acceptance of imperial domination, but an understanding that the periphery has developed an integrated relationship with the metropole that goes beyond any material advantages or disadvantages. In short, the periphery accepts rule from the metropole because it has begun to identify with the metropole.

States with tremendous amounts of hard material capability are still concerned with establishing some level of legitimacy because there is never enough power to

control all of the population all of the time. While many autocratic governments have shown that the consolidation and concentration of hard, coercive power is a very viable way to exert control and defend the state, this use of power is also extremely costly and difficult to sustain. Few autocratic governments survive long without achieving some level of legitimacy and authority. While a monopoly on the use of force often enables empires or states to demand allegiance, the monopoly is itself sustained by recognition of the legitimacy of the state.

The concept of sovereignty is often used to account for the internal order and stability of a state. Stephen Krasner separates sovereignty into four different usages of the term while still adhering to a more traditional logic of internal and external sovereignty.⁸¹ He describes internal sovereignty as the “level of effective control exercised by those holding authority” including the ability of public authorities to control transborder movements, while external sovereignty is the mutual recognition of political societies in the international system and their right to exclude external actors from “domestic authority configurations.” Embedded within Krasner’s definitions of sovereignty are requirements for internal and external legitimacy. Authority refers to the internal legitimation of a state’s power, while the ‘right to exclude’ stems from an external legitimacy accorded by the international society of states.

⁸¹ Stephen D. Krasner, *Sovereignty: Organized Hypocrisy* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1999) 9.

Alex Wendt views authority as the right of the sovereignty to do what it wants whether it is able to or not. "Authority requires legitimacy, not mere influence or power."⁸² Internally, this means that citizens of the state or those ruled by an empire believe that the government has the right to control their society through the establishment of laws and institutions. Similarly from an external perspective, "to the extent that a state accepts some international rule or body as legitimate that rule or body becomes an authority."⁸³ External legitimacy, therefore, derives from the normative belief by states that a rule or institution of sovereignty ought to be obeyed. States pursue internal and external legitimacy because it is a more efficient way to control the population and protect it from invasion. This is because "an organization that is perceived by an actor as a legitimate rule maker is in a position of power over the actor, but it is power in a broader sense (that is, authority) rather than the coercive power of the bully."⁸⁴ Instead of relying on costly programs for civil and military defense, states can allocate precious material resources to growth and development because the threat from rebellion or external attack has been suppressed. Figure 2.3 graphically depicts the logic and mechanism of persistent imperial control.

⁸² Alexander Wendt, *Social Theory of International Politics*, *Cambridge Studies in International Relations* 67 (Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1999) 208.

⁸³ Ian Hurd, "Legitimacy and Authority in International Politics," *International Organization* 53, no. 2 (1999): 381.

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*: 401.

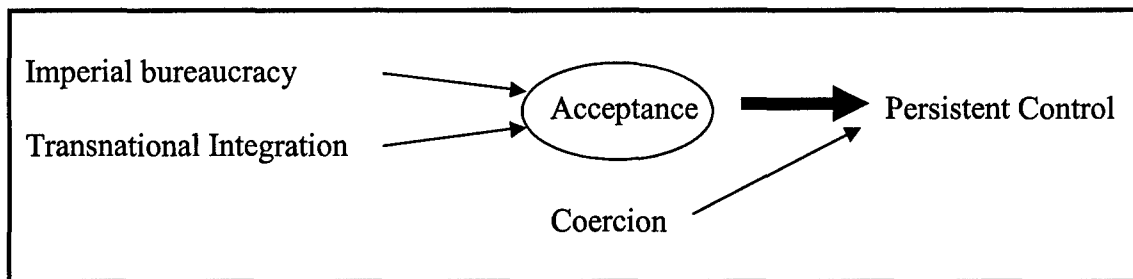


Figure 2.3 Causal Logic of Persistence

2.4.4 Imperial Collapse

An empire, therefore, extends political control through power and coercion, but then maintains control over the periphery by establishing its authority. The demise of empire is often the result of a weakened metropolitan power or a strengthened peripheral society. In this sense, political power is determined by capabilities and resources as well as the ability of the metropole or the periphery to unite politically. Authority, on the other hand, derives from the legitimacy of the metropole to exercise power over the periphery. Regardless of the political unity of the periphery, if the rule of the metropole is accepted, or at least tolerated, then the empire has established its authority. The most successful empires are those that experienced the greatest changes and yet were most adaptable to the changing political relationships. In this sense, empire can be viewed as simply the process of metropolitan expansion. When that process results in a nation-state and the periphery

is incorporated into the metropole, we call it state building. When the process falls short and the periphery gains (or regains) its independence, we call it the collapse of empire.⁸⁵

While the collapse of empire is often attributed to a lack of material capabilities, the reasons for persistence derive from the accepted internal and external legitimacy of the empire. The source of that legitimacy for empire is a strong, imperial bureaucracy that continues to integrate the periphery with the metropole. At the height of the Ottoman Empire, Suleiman had established a legal system that created a stable and predictable society. Further, he instituted an educational system and political process that functioned to integrate the periphery with the metropole. These elements established considerable legitimacy for the empire. Unfortunately, the very bureaucracy that had made the Ottoman Empire became corrupt and began to whither.

Even though Suleiman introduced reforms to address the growing corruption, the elaborate structures he created quickly eroded following his rule. The power of the state, internally and externally, began to perceptibly decline. Historians often highlight the internal decline in the bureaucracy along with the failure to modernize as the principle reason for the decay of the Empire. "It was not the product of political collapse but of slow stagnation as creative social impulses were smothered by a protective bureaucracy, leaving the Ottoman realm technically far behind rivals

⁸⁵ Suny, "The Empire Strikes Out"

who possessed less disciplined but more creative societies.”⁸⁶ There was decreased vigilance by subsequent Sultans over the functions of government and the consequent corruption, as well as a decreased interest of the government in popular opinion, undermined the authority of the Ottoman Empire. Their legitimacy and ‘right to rule’ depended for the most part on their ability to protect the people from corruption and injustice.

Similarly, in 1985 all the elements were in place for the Soviet Union to retain its legitimacy and continue as an empire, but Gorbachev realized that the people could not “go on living like this.” Nevertheless, it was still possible for Gorbachev to maintain the legitimacy of the Soviet Union and guide the republics through a transition to a more democratic federation. The solution was to transform rather than dismantle the old central bureaucracy. There was sufficient transnational integration for some of the republics to remain interested in some type of Soviet Union. Without a functioning, legitimate central government, there was little Gorbachev could do to prevent the republics from establishing their own authority and sovereignty.

⁸⁶ Doyle, *Empires* 108.

2.5 *Scope of the Theory*

The theory in this chapter is about strategies of imperial control. While I have presented the theory as if it is applicable to all modern empires, I recognize that there may be real limits to the effectiveness of the strategies. This is because I have not considered the developmental state of the periphery or the level of nationalism present within it. Many scholars argue that peripheral national identities can be influenced—even developed—by the metropole.⁸⁷ What I do not address in this dissertation is the fact that some peripheries have different starting points in their national development and therefore may be less susceptible to imperial manipulation of identities.

Ronald Suny, Michael Doyle, and Benedict Anderson believe that as the periphery becomes socially differentiated and politically integrated, an empire will face increasing challenges from the periphery and begin to demand political independence.⁸⁸ In contrast to their logic, I have theorized that peripheral national identities and nationalism can be manipulated by imperial politics so that independence or separation is not the only outcome for the periphery. By meeting the political and social needs of the periphery, my theory on imperial persistence suggests that empires are able to manipulate a periphery's developing identity. Nevertheless,

⁸⁷ Ronald Grigor Suny, *The Making of the Georgian Nation*, 2nd ed. (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1994), Suny, *The Revenge of the Past: Nationalism, Revolution, and the Collapse of the Soviet Union*.

⁸⁸ Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*, Doyle, *Empires*, Suny and Martin, *A State of Nations: Empire and Nation-Making in the Age of Lenin and Stalin*.

there are real limits to how much an empire can actually affect the identity of some already well established peripheries. In these cases, the peripheral society already has a highly developed sense of nationalist identity accompanied by strong expressions of nationalism. Since all peripheries have different level of nationalist identities, they potentially have different trajectories of nationalism depending in part on previous notions of the nation and nationalism.

In this dissertation I do not treat nationalism or nationalist identity as an independent variable that can affect the outcome of the imperial strategies. Rather, I assume, that the peripheries have malleable identities regardless of the pre-existing levels of nationalism. The reality of empires, however, is that there may be cases where the identity of the periphery is so well established that no matter how well the methods of imperial control are applied, the periphery will still not accept imperial rule from the metropolitan state. For the Soviet Union these extreme cases were rather rare, especially when the Union was first being formed. By the end of World War II, however, the situation was already changing.

For example, the identity of the Baltic countries had changed significantly between the period of the Russian revolution and the forced incorporation in 1940. When eventually incorporated into the Soviet Empire, many regions including Eastern Europe, the Baltics, and Western Ukraine had already experienced independence for decades and were beginning to develop a nationalist identity as well a viable nation-state. Those decades of independence meant that the Soviet Union

would have to work that much harder at meeting the social and political demands of the region specifically acceding to the regions demands for more political autonomy. More contemporaneously, the Russian Federation is facing a similar challenge in creating a supranational identity for Chechnya.

This dissertation was designed to test the plausibility of the theory in cases where peripheral identities appeared to be affected by the metropole.⁸⁹ For these reasons, the following chapters do not necessarily explore the full scope of the theory or its explanatory limits. Whether because of historical independence or even long term adversity with the metropole, some nationalist peripheries may be beyond the scope of this theory. The hard cases such as the Baltic regions or even Chechnya are not examined in depth and therefore do not show how effective the methods of persistent imperial control are in all cases. The case studies examined in the next three chapters are used simply to establish the credibility of the theory and its potential in explaining how empires can maintain themselves for long periods of time. The next phase of this project will examine other empires and explore the more difficult cases in depth in order to test the limits of the theory.

⁸⁹ Based on Suny's work in *Revenge of the Past*, this was a principal reason that the Soviet Empire was selected.

Table 2.1 List of Hypotheses

Hypothesis 1: The more coercive the empire, the more likely the periphery will reject imperial rule.

Corollary: Excessive use of coercive force will decrease peripheral acceptance of the metropole and increase the likelihood that independence movements will develop.

Hypothesis 2: The more effective the imperial institutions, the more likely the periphery will accept continued imperial rule.

Hypothesis 3: The greater imperial integration, the more likely the periphery will accept imperial rule.

Corollary: Peripheral elites included in the political process of empire will be more supportive or tolerant of imperial policy.

Corollary: Peripheries that participate in imperial training and education will more likely accept or tolerate the empire.

Table 2.2 Theories of Empire

	Rise	Persistence	Decline
Doyle	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Metropolitan Power • Peripheral weakness • International system 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Political Power • Transnational Extension of Metropole 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Peripheral Society becomes socially differentiated and politically integrated
Lieven	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Great Power 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Authoritarian Government • Integration of Metropole and Periphery • Great Power 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inefficiencies (cost) of Empire • Democratization of Empire
Fahrenkrug	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coercion 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Institutions • Integration • Coercion 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Weak Institutions • Lack of transnational integration • Excessive coercion

CHAPTER 3

FAILED INSTITUTIONS: THE SOVIET UNION

3.1 Introduction

In this chapter I begin my analysis of the imperial relationships of the former Soviet Union. Specifically, I explore strategies the Communist Party used to maintain control of the fifteen republics and various autonomous regions that formed the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics. The most common explanation for both the Soviet Union's persistence and collapse is the reliance on coercion. The Soviet Union was an authoritarian state that did not permit opposition or dissent against the Communist Party or the Soviet state. Nationalist expressions were closely controlled and rarely permitted. In particular, the police-state structure constructed by Stalin suppressed any form of anti-Soviet expression and brutally repressed groups and individuals that criticized or spoke out against the Communist system. Nationalism simply could not find a voice in this type of repressive state structure. During the late 1980s, under *glasnost* and *perestroika*, nationalism was finally able to flourish. As

Gorbachev relaxed the use of coercion, the repressed nations seized an opportunity to break free of Soviet control.

The problem with this accounting is that it completely ignores other strategies the Soviet Union used to maintain control of the empire. Further, there is an underlying assumption that nationalist identities and the desire for independence were already present and fully formed within the periphery. This leaves no room for the dynamics of Soviet imperial control that may have affected the way nationalism developed or was expressed. In this chapter I will show that the Soviet Union, like all previous empires, maintained control of its peripheries through the use of coercion, bureaucratic institutions, and transnational integration. More importantly, I will argue that it was the effectiveness of these last two strategies that determined the Soviet Union's ability to persist as an empire and the reason it failed to transition to a multi-national federation.

In the previous chapter, I posited that the most persistent empires were those that became accepted by the periphery. Peripheral acceptance is primarily the result of strong, centralized institutions that create order, stability, and predictability within the empire. Acceptance is further reinforced through transnational integration that increases ties between the center and periphery and eventually creates some type of common identity. Excessive reliance on coercion, on the other hand, undermines both of these strategies and results in resentment, resistance, and eventual rebellion against imperial control. The persistence of the Soviet Union therefore depended on

the effectiveness of its imperial strategies and the degree to which it relied on coercion, institutions, and integration to maintain control of the periphery.

To account for the Soviet Union's ability to continue as an empire and in order to understand the dynamics of Soviet imperial control, I trace the use of coercion, institutions and integration through four periods of Soviet history. The first period begins with the Russian Revolution and ends with Lenin's death. Under Lenin's New Economic Plan there was a hope and belief that the Union could actually develop into the ideal socialist state that communists long envisioned. Stalin brutally ended this hope, however, during the next period when he established a pattern of excessive coercion. This will have deep repercussions for successive leaders that in the end proves impossible to overcome.

Following Stalin, Nikita Khrushchev attempted to undue some of the excesses of Stalinism and return vitality to Soviet institutions and the ideals of socialism. But his effort was short lived. Following his ouster, Leonid Brezhnev reversed many of the reforms and the Soviet Union entered a period of economic and political "stagnation." Still, by the end of this period, centralized institutions in the Soviet Union had created a substantial level of acceptance and legitimacy for the Communist Party and even made collapse or separation seem unimaginable to most of the republics.¹ In addition, the development of transnational ties reinforced peripheral acceptance of the Soviet Union and was particularly evident by the desire of most the

¹ Mark Beissinger lays out the unimaginable versus the inevitable argument in his opening chapter. See Beissinger, *Nationalist Mobilization and the Collapse of the Soviet State*.

republics to remain a part of some type of union even while the central bureaucracy was failing.²

The final period examines the abrupt collapse of the Soviet Union and why it failed to transition to a more egalitarian multi-national federation. As one of the most powerful countries in the world, the Soviet Union was considered a superpower that formed part of a stable bi-polar international structure. Prior to its collapse, the breakup of the Soviet Union and separation into independent nation-states was rarely considered and definitely not anticipated. The United States regarded the Soviet Union as a formidable threat and persistent enemy—not some antiquated empire that was expected to go the way of all previous empires. More importantly, outside of perhaps the Baltic republics, nationalists were not actively fighting against the empire or trying to achieve independence from the Soviet Union. Why did the Soviet Union, that appeared as such a powerful and stable multinational state, rapidly fracture into independent states? Was the Soviet Union no longer able to repress or contain separatist nationalism within the periphery or was some other dynamic at work?

I trace the outcomes of each strategy and find that a greatly weakened central bureaucracy was the principle reason the Soviet Union failed to persist as an empire. The rapid loss of control in the late 1980s brings into sharp relief the growing weakness of the central bureaucracy. In addition, conflicting nationality policies

² A referendum held in April 1991 showed that 78% of the population wished to remain part of a Soviet Union, albeit with more democratic freedoms and more autonomy for the republics. See Suny, *The Revenge of the Past: Nationalism, Revolution, and the Collapse of the Soviet Union*.

impeded continued transnational integration, weakened ties with the center, and resulted in the empowerment of republic nationalities.

3.2 1917 – 1921: *Building the Empire*

In February 1917, in the town of St Petersburg, some female textile workers started a strike that rapidly became a revolution. In October of that year a new Soviet government led by Lenin and the Bolshevik-Communist Party dissolved the newly formed Constitutional Assembly and ignited a struggle over what type of socialist state Russia would become. The ensuing civil war would pit the Bolsheviks and the Red Army, who controlled the major cities in Russia, against the Mensheviks and Social Revolutionaries who controlled many of the governments in the non-Russian provinces. Some of these non-Russian provinces such as Ukraine, Georgia, and the Baltics had already claimed their independence from Russia during the revolution. In keeping with his stated views on self-determination, Lenin acknowledged these claims to national independence, but insisted on Bolshevik-Communist rule and subservience to a central party. Thus, nationalist claims for independence were subsumed in a civil war over ideological claims of warring socialist parties. By the end of the civil war, the only states to end up independent were those along the Baltic: Poland, Finland, Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania.

Following the Russian revolution, the new government under Lenin and Stalin was rhetorically anti-imperial. In fact, most of the revolutionary leaders were principally reacting against the imperial practices of the Russian Tsars and they were determined to end Russian domination of the non-Russian peoples. Many of the non-Russian groups actually declared their independence from the former empire and set up national governments separate from the Russian political parties. The civil war, however, reversed this process as the Bolshevik Party steadily regained control over the territories of the former Russian empire. By 1922 the newly formed Union of Soviet Socialist Republics encompassed many of the regions previously controlled by Tsarist Russia. Terry Martin argues that the Bolshevik's strategy after the October revolution "was to assume leadership over what appeared to be the inevitable process of decolonization and to carry it out in a manner that would preserve the territorial integrity of the old Russian empire and enable the construction of a new centralized, socialist state."³

In addition to regaining control of much of the Tsarist Empire, the Bolshevik Party elites increasingly treated the republics in an imperial manner. Reflecting upon decades of working with the Soviet Union, American Ambassador Jack Matlock describes how the Soviet imperial relationship formed as the result of conquest by a political party. "The metropole was the Communist ruling class, the *nomenklatura*,

³ Terry Martin, "An Affirmative Action Empire: The Soviet Union as the Highest Form of Imperialism." in Suny and Martin, *A State of Nations: Empire and Nation-Making in the Age of Lenin and Stalin* 67.

not a nationality. The Communist Party colonized Russia as surely as it did Ukraine, Georgia, and Uzbekistan.”⁴ Ron Suny agrees: “Neither tsarist Russia nor the Soviet Union was an ethnically ‘Russian Empire’ with the metropole completely identified with a ruling Russian nationality. Rather, the ruling institution -- nobility in one case, the Communist Party elite in the other -- was multinational, though primarily Russian and ruled imperially over Russian and non-Russian subjects alike.”⁵ The Ottoman and Austro-Hungarian empires had similar political structures in which a particular ruling class constituted the metropole of the empire.

Rhetorically, the Soviet Union was conceived of and presented to the world as a multi-national, federated union of independent states. The reality, however, was that Communist Party elite inequitably controlled the Soviet nationalist republics primarily through a cadre system known as the *nomenklatura*. “In comparative imperial terms Soviet federalism was a species of indirect rule. Natives ruled their own territories under central supervision, and to some extent under the watchful eye of Moscow’s non-native local agents.”⁶ This type of inequitable relationship between the Communist Party elite and the Republics is what makes the Soviet Union an empire. The Soviet Union was run by “an imperial Party elite, largely Russian in

⁴ Jack F. Matlock, *Autopsy on an Empire: The American Ambassador's Account of the Collapse of the Soviet Union*, 1st ed. (New York: Random House, 1995) 23.

⁵ Ronald Suny, “Living in the Hood: Russia, Empire, and the Old and New Neighbors”, originally prepared for Robert Legvold’s volume, “Russian Foreign Policy in Historical Perspective” (October 27, 2003) REVISED DRAFT (September 30, 2005), 11.

⁶ Lieven, *Empire: The Russian Empire and Its Rivals* 313.

ethnicity but Soviet in loyalty.”⁷ The power of this analysis of empire—understanding that the central government did not treat the republics like federated states, but instead more like an empire—comes from its exposure of the imperial dynamics that contributed to the Union’s persistence and its demise.

In the modern era, one of the keys to determining whether an empire is successfully maintaining control of its periphery is the presence of mass demonstrations or nationalist movements against the imperial power. Dating well before the Russian revolution of 1917, some of the more nationalized republics such as the Baltics, Western Ukraine, or Georgia were particularly difficult to control. These regions were more developed than other areas and therefore required stronger institutions and increasing transnational ties to gain acceptance of Bolshevik control. Even though Soviet leaders claimed to have solved the “nationality problem”, the reality was that the nationalities in these regions developed independently from the Soviet Union and were never sufficiently integrated. For the most part, these nationalities were only repressed or held at bay for a time, never becoming a part of the centralized bureaucracy or developing transnational ties with the center. In order to better understand the challenges to Soviet control, I review of the ebb and flow of social and national dissent in the Soviet Union.

Interestingly, the formation of these independent states was not the result of broad based nationalist movements, but instead was “the artificial result of German

⁷ Ibid. 318.

politics and the immediate weakness of the central Russian state.”⁸ In fact, throughout most of the republics that had temporarily gained independence during the civil war, there was not a strongly unified national identity. In *The Revenge of the Past*, Ron Suny finds that popular national consciousness and a desire for independent statehood were simply not present. “In the great sweep of the revolution and civil war, nationalism was for most nationalities still largely concentrated among the ethnic intelligentsia, the students, and the lower middle classes of the town, with at best a fleeting following among broader strata.”⁹ He goes on to show that nationalism expressed as desire for autonomous rule of a specified territory existed in only a few of the regions that would later become Soviet republics or even autonomous regions. With the exception of Armenia and possibly Latvia, the various ethnic populations lacked a national identity that could be sufficiently mobilized to fend off Bolshevik aggression, let alone recognize a need to fight for continuing independence.

3.2.1 Creating Bureaucratic Institutions

Ironically, Marxist and Leninist ideology left no room for a state or its bureaucratic apparatus. An international revolution was expected to triumph over

⁸ Ronald Grigor Suny, *The Soviet Experiment: Russia, the USSR, and the Successor States* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1998) 110.

⁹ Suny, *The Revenge of the Past: Nationalism, Revolution, and the Collapse of the Soviet Union* 80.

capitalism while worker soviets and communism were supposed to replace the former bourgeoisie institutions. Soon after the revolution, however, the Bolshevik Party realized that it still needed institutions in order to maintain power. So it created a government bureaucracy that was in many ways similar to Western style bureaucracies. To justify the creation of a socialist state and an associated bureaucracy, the Bolshevik Party declared itself the vanguard of the socialist revolution and established a dictatorship of the proletariat through its bureaucratic institutions.

Interestingly, this made Soviet bureaucracy fundamentally different from other rational systems—the function of the state and the professed ideology of those ruling the state were at odds with one another. The result was a complex web of bureaucratic structures that were defined as either part of the state or the Communist Party but in reality were intimately linked. “This was because party positions intervened at every strategic point in the structure, and because the pinnacle of the system, with respect to decisional authority, was occupied by the party—specifically, the Politburo and the Central Committee.”¹⁰ With the creation of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republic in 1922, the Communist Party succeeded in creating a state and party bureaucratic structure but it would not become fully centralized until after Lenin’s death.

¹⁰ Valerie Bunce, *Subversive Institutions: The Design and the Destruction of Socialism and the State*, *Cambridge Studies in Comparative Politics* (Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1999) 23.

3.2.2 Soviet Integration

During the civil war, Lenin and Stalin witnessed the rise of anti-Russian nationalism that they believed was the result of Tsarist imperialism and Great Russian chauvinism. In response, they instituted a nationalities policy that Terry Martin found to be historically unique. The Bolshevik government went to great lengths to create national structures for most of the Soviet Union's non-Russian ethnic groups, even those that had expressed no national sentiments. The policy eventually became known as *korenizatsiia* and it "decisively rejected the model of the nation-state and replaced it with a plurality of nation-like republics. The Bolsheviks attempted to fuse the nationalists' demand for national territory, culture, language, and elites with the socialist demand for an economically and politically unitary state."¹¹ The result was an "Affirmative Action Empire" that established written languages when none existed; encouraged and developed national cultures and histories; and divided the territory of the Soviet Union into ethno-national regions all the way down to the local or village level. This nationalist structure was eventually codified in the Soviet's federated constitution and in theory granted autonomy to each of the national republics as well as several autonomous regions below the republican level. For most

¹¹ Terry Martin, *The Affirmative Action Empire: Nations and Nationalism in the Soviet Union, 1923-1939* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2001).

republics, even this “paper” autonomy represented an advance over the previous Tsarist system.¹²

Unfortunately for the Communist Party, the Soviet Union’s ethno-federal structure only served to strengthen nationalist sentiments while fostering the growth of nationalist elites within the republics. In tracing the development of nationalism in the Soviet Union, Ronald Suny found that at the time of the civil war national identities were not well formed (and at times even non-existent) for most of the republics that became “nationalized” under Lenin and Stalin.¹³ By the time Gorbachev comes to power, however, the republics have developed into relatively autonomous regions with increased levels of a national identity and a cadre of national elites that are primarily loyal to their republics. “Many nationalities became demographically more consolidated within their ‘homelands,’ acquired effective and articulate national political and intellectual elites, and developed a shared national consciousness.”¹⁴ Ironically, Lenin’s plan for undermining nationalism in the Soviet Union accomplished the exact opposite by creating nations where none existed and by strengthening already existing national identities.

Over time, the Soviet Union literally drew tens of thousands of national borders forcing “every village, indeed every individual, to declare an ethnic

¹² Adam Bruno Ulam and Samuel Hutchison Beer, *The Russian Political System* (New York: Random House, 1974) 74.

¹³ Suny, *The Revenge of the Past: Nationalism, Revolution, and the Collapse of the Soviet Union*.

¹⁴ Ibid.

allegiance and fight to remain a national majority rather than a minority.” Martin concludes that it is “difficult to conceive of any measure more likely to increase ethnic mobilization and ethnic conflict.”¹⁵ When the Soviet Union begins to fracture in the late 1980s it does so primarily along the territorial lines created during the formative years of Lenin and Stalin. Rather than satisfy ethnic and nationalist claims, *korenizatsiia* actually exacerbated a problem that continues to plague many of the former Soviet republics today. In the end, the federal structure becomes the very mechanism through which the Soviet Union collapses as republics assert their sovereignty and claim their right to secede.

While the policies adopted under Lenin and Stalin had the effect of creating and strengthening nationalities, it is important to remember that this was never their objective. “The goal of the Soviet nationality policy and federalism was not to create viable national cultures or truly autonomous Union Republics, but to integrate, assimilate and unify the multi-national society into a proletarian socialist culture.”¹⁶ More importantly, Soviet leaders viewed nationalism, like capitalism, as simply an inevitable stage that the Communist Party must guide the proletariat through. Just as dictatorship of the proletariat was required to usher in the international revolution, so too nations must be allowed to develop before that they could become socialist internationals.

¹⁵ Martin, *The Affirmative Action Empire: Nations and Nationalism in the Soviet Union, 1923-1939* 73.

¹⁶ Karel Hulicka and Irene M. Hulicka, *Soviet Institutions, the Individual and Society* (Boston: Christopher Pub. House, 1967) 176.

3.3 1928 – 1953: *Stalinism*

When Stalin took control of the Party, he finally brought the Soviet Union across Doyle's Augustan threshold for imperial persistence by establishing a highly centralized party bureaucracy. The books detailing Soviet totalitarianism and the use of force to control its empire are numerous and widely cited.¹⁷ However, coercion was neither ubiquitous nor consistently applied and totalitarianism is a more pejorative term than an accurate description of the Soviet Union's ability to control its population through terror and repression. Even during the horrific period of Stalin, when coercion was a dominant strategy for retaining control of the republics, the Soviet Union still used political institutions and socialization programs to foster allegiance to the Communist system.

3.3.1 Extreme Coercion

Following the revolution and the civil war there was little agreement over how to deal with the various nationalities that were now a part of the Soviet Union. Lenin adhered to a Marxist perspective on self-determination and considered nationalism a bourgeoisie phenomenon that would eventually pass as socialism took root in the republics. Stalin, however, feared that unconstrained nationalism within the Soviet republics would undermine the power of the Communist Party and the central

¹⁷ Even Soviet dissidents were familiar with George Orwell's more fictional descriptions of totalitarian governments. See Suny, *The Soviet Experiment: Russia, the USSR, and the Successor States* 430.

government. As commissar of nationalities under the newly formed Communist government, Stalin ensured that ethno-national groups were recognized, but remained a part of the Communist Party. As Lenin's health failed, Stalin took further steps to increase Party control of the republics. In one of these early incidences, Stalin acted against Georgian national communists and installed party members with strict loyalties to himself.¹⁸

By the 1930s Stalin was determined to repress any type of anti-Communist dissent including any nationalist expressions that challenged Soviet superiority. Certainly the most brutal period of Soviet history, Stalinism ruthlessly crushed dissent and opposition to the Communist party and the Soviet government, and ethno-nationalist expression was no longer tolerated. Expressions of nationalist pride by minorities were at first strongly discouraged and then later harshly repressed. Not surprisingly, historians have found almost no evidence of any nationalist movement or dissident organization existing under Stalinism. Stalin's use of coercion was extremely effective in thwarting any opposition. As this chapter will show later, however, this was a policy that was not sustainable and some of Stalin's most brutal practices will become rallying points for future nationalist movements.¹⁹

¹⁸ Suny, *The Making of the Georgian Nation*.

¹⁹ Even in the Russian Federation today, Chechen separatists have used the deportation by Stalin as evidence that Russia is only interested in subjugating the Muslim population. For a concise historical account of the Stalin's policies in Chechnya see John B. Dunlop, *Russia Confronts Chechnya: Roots of a Separatist Conflict* (Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1998).

The increased reliance on coercion developed during Stalin's "revolution from above" and his efforts to collectivize agriculture. Ostensibly begun in the 1930's as a way to strengthen the Soviet economy and support rapid industrialization, Stalin's true goals were to strip the peasant farmers of their market control of grain prices and consolidate his hold over the Soviet empire. He succeeded in creating a system and structure of coercion that not only kept the population in check, but also ensured that the republics and their leaders would remain loyal to the Communist Party. Under Stalin, the most brutal methods of coercion and intimidation were applied throughout the empire including forced movements of population groups and nationalities and extensive purges of the elites and state leaders, and any one else Stalin believed would conspire against him.²⁰

3.3.2 Bureaucratic Institutions

The centralization of power is absolutely fundamental to the survival of any multinational or federal type of political structure and in particular empires. Stalin built a highly centralized bureaucracy that firmly established party control of the republics and strengthened his position as a dictator of the state. Relations in the Soviet Union between the center and the periphery were increasingly different on

²⁰ For a review of events and a traditional explanation see Robert Conquest, *The Great Terror: A Reassessment* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1990).; Zbigniew Brzezinski, *The Permanent Purge; Politics in Soviet Totalitarianism, Russian Research Center Studies 20* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1956).

political, cultural, and economic levels. "As the regime became ever more centralized and bureaucratized in Moscow, the inequitable, imperial relations between center and peripheries became the norm until actual sovereignty existed only in the center."²¹ That brought the Soviet Union across what Michael Doyle terms the Augustan threshold for establishing a persistent empire.

Like the Roman Emperor Augustus in the first century BC, Stalin reformed the administrative system of the Soviet Union into a highly centralized bureaucracy and the Communist Party "acquired a special, charismatic influence over the polity" that would endure until the end of the Soviet Union.²² If empires are defined as systems of political inequality where a central, metropolitan society rules over another peripheral society, then the behavior of the Communist Party toward each of the republics, especially after Stalin, was clearly imperial. The peak of Soviet centralized control occurs under Stalin during the decade leading up to World War II. Like Rome in the first century B.C., the Soviet Union needed administrative leadership that only an "authoritarian, bureaucratic revolution could provide."²³

²¹ Suny, "Living in the Hood", 20.

²² Doyle, *Empires* 95.

²³ Ibid. 94.

3.3.3 Transnational Integration

Despite Stalin's despotic rule, Soviet leaders still "conceived of the USSR as a single country and sought to create a Soviet people united by common customs, loyalties and ideals."²⁴ In many ways, it was their idyllic devotion to the socialist project along with the creation of a rational, bureaucratic structure that allowed the Soviet Union to persist as long as it does. In the years leading up to World War II, Stalin begins to scale back *korenizatsiia* and attempts to create a Soviet identity. "As defense of the 'motherland' (*rodina*) became paramount in the mind of Stalin, the USSR became a nationalizing empire intent on founding its identity and security on a new 'imagined community:' the Soviet people."²⁵

Soviet victory in World War II was probably the single most important factor in legitimizing Soviet rule. "Hatred for the Germans contributed to a strong surge of national feeling, and the Soviet people rallied strongly behind their government."²⁶ The fact that so many Soviets had suffered during the war as a result of fascism, coupled with the emergence of a new "capitalist" and "imperialist" threat, served to strengthen the ideological appeal of Soviet State and its socialist agenda.²⁷ The

²⁴ Lieven, *Empire: The Russian Empire and Its Rivals* 318.

²⁵ Ronald Suny, "Living in the Hood: Russia, Empire, and the Old and New Neighbors", originally prepared for Robert Legvold's volume, "Russian Foreign Policy in Historical Perspective" (October 27, 2003) REVISED DRAFT (September 30, 2005), 18.

²⁶ Hulicka and Hulicka, *Soviet Institutions, the Individual and Society* 110.; see also Merle Fainsod, *How Russia Is Ruled*, Rev. ed. (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1963). pp.113, 291.;

²⁷ Anthony Marx discusses the importance of the enemy in constructing a nationalist identity. Marx, *Faith in Nation: Exclusionary Origins of Nationalism*.

Communist Party worked hard to unite the population against a common enemy as way to overcome deep ethnic differences and poor social conditions.

3.3.4 Summary

Stalinism resulted in an empire with highly centralized bureaucratic control that was maintained by a destructive terror. In part due to his deep suspicions and insecurity, and in part because of his determination to industrialize the economy, Stalin brutally establishes himself as a dictator of the Communist Party and eventually the Soviet Union. Ronald Suny describes the Soviet Union during this period of time as “a leviathan state headed by a leader with totalitarian ambitions.” Stalin’s near obsession to control the bureaucracy and remain in power, resulted in a Soviet bureaucracy that reached into almost every aspect of Soviet life. “The Soviet State expanded enormously, swallowing up much that [had] been left to the market and to society in the 1920s. The political apparatus took over the economy, dominated all aspects of culture, and eliminated any social movements it did not initiate or could not control.”²⁸ More importantly, as a result of Stalin’s political purges, local political machines and cliques were crushed and temporary allegiance to the center was achieved.

²⁸ Suny, *The Soviet Experiment: Russia, the USSR, and the Successor States* 217.

Stalin, however, irreparably affected the Soviet system of order. The tentacles of the Communist Party reached almost every aspect of Soviet life. Whether on the farm, at the factory, in a store, or simply spending time at a park, Soviet citizens were deeply aware that their government was watching them, sometimes very closely. This degree of coercive control, however, did not create a more stable or productive society as Peter Liberman would suggest. Instead, there was a high degree of fear and uncertainty associated with this type of “legal” system where at any given time a person could be arrested and sentenced without knowingly having committed a crime. As long as this level of fear could be maintained, there was little doubt that the Soviet Union could keep its periphery from rebelling against the empire. As the following sections will elaborate, however, this level of fear was not sustainable primarily because it hindered the development of stable institutions.

3.4 1953 – 1985: Post Stalinism

Following Stalin, Khrushchev and the Party elites realized that relying solely on coercive force was detrimental to the long term persistence of the Soviet Union. During Khrushchev’s speech to the 20th Party Congress in February 1956, he publicly acknowledged the atrocities of Stalinism and attempted to distance the Party from

those coercive practices.²⁹ Unfortunately, years of Stalinism had completely replaced any legal system through which dissent and political rebellion could be controlled. More problematically, the republics had developed systems of patronage that severed many of the links that should have existed within the constitutional structure of the Soviet Union.

3.4.1 Role of Coercion

Ronald Suny's analysis of the Soviet Union during this period concludes that rather than increase ties to the center, coercive power from above had resulted in a decentralization of power. "Concentration of power at the top often had the opposite effect, fostering local centers of power and low-level disorganization. The trend toward authoritarianism created 'Little Stalins' throughout the country and in the national republics ethno-political machines threatened the reach of the central government."³⁰ Mirroring the Soviet Union's tsarist past, this coercive structure meant that later attempts to loosen state control of political dissension would be enormously difficult to overcome.³¹ Even though the brutality of Stalinism was

²⁹ "Nikita Khrushchev's 'Secret Speech' to the Twentieth Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, February 25, 1956" in Ronald Grigor Suny, *The Structure of Soviet History: Essays and Documents* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2003).

³⁰ Suny, *The Soviet Experiment: Russia, the USSR, and the Successor States* 253.

³¹ Frederick C. Barghoorn, "The Post-Khrushchev Campaign to Suppress Dissent: Perspective, Strategies, and Techniques of Repression." in Tökés, *Dissent in the USSR: Politics, Ideology, and People* 90.

eventually discredited by Party elites, a pattern of coercion had become institutionalized within the imperial bureaucracy that coupled with an elite fear of losing control during subsequent periods of liberalization meant coercion as a policy would be difficult to overcome.

With the death of Stalin, Soviet politics entered a time of stabilization and routinization. Under the "thaw" of Khrushchev, thousands of political prisoners are "reevaluated" and subsequently returned to society. This marks the rebirth of the dissident movement stimulated in part by revelations of Stalin's atrocities during Khrushchev's address to the 20th Party Congress. In their review of Soviet dissent from 1953 to 1983, Aleexeva and Chalidze describe the initial movements that form after Stalin's death.³² The first to organize protests to the authorities were the nations and ethnic groups that had been deported by Stalin from their homelands to the eastern regions of the Soviet Union. Following Stalin's death, most of these nationalities were allowed to return to their homeland. One of the truly nationalist movements during this period was organized by the Crimean Tatars, who had not been permitted to return to their homeland. These nationalist protests were soon accompanied by movements in Western Ukraine and the Baltic republics. In Vilnius there were frequent demonstrations attended by thousands of people, whose banners read "Russians, go home!" and "Freedom for Lithuania!"

³² L. i udmila Alekseeva, *Soviet Dissent: Contemporary Movements for National, Religious, and Human Rights* (Middletown, Conn.: Wesleyan University Press, 1985).

Alexeeva and Chalidze surmise that in the later years of this period, the government exercised greater flexibility and caution in the use of force against nationality disorders.³³ They believe this was due in part to the increased level of information that was now available (unofficially) to the population and the Western press. Shootings and the excessive use of force were not as easily hidden as during the Stalin years. They cite several sources of tension between authority and the USSR's population including the dissatisfaction of non-Russian nations with their situation in the USSR overall; the economic situation of workers; and the constraints and violations of civic freedoms. More significantly, they found that "The national and cultural movement in Georgia and the Baltic states, in contrast to other types of opposition to the authorities, is not losing participants; on the contrary-gradually, these movements are becoming more and more mass ones, seeking ever-newer possibilities and forms of struggle."³⁴ Nevertheless, nationalists movements do not really exist outside of these regions and the few that do exist are not threatening to tear apart the Soviet Union.

Several scholars argue that the regularity of Soviet style coercion during this period contributed to the persistence of the empire. There was an expectation by the population that dissent and rebellion would always be put down by the central government. In the late Soviet period it was this regularity, predictability, and

³³ In the twenty cases from 1965-1983 when troops were called to control mass unrest, there was only one situation where the troops resorted to shooting. Ibid.

³⁴ Ludmilla Alexeeva and Valery Chalidze, "Mass Unrest in the USSR," (Office of Net Assessment of the U.S. Department of Defense, 1985), 381.

efficiency of control instead of the severity of violence that accounted for the low levels of rebellion. Under Brezhnev, the “predictable, consistent, and efficient application of low level and moderate coercion proved extremely effective.”³⁵ Under Gorbachev, this meant that any failure to address challenges to Soviet authority would diminish expectations that the Soviet Union would always prevent dissension. This would in turn bolster dissidents in other regions or those with other political agendas to attempt their own demonstrations and protests. Since, up to this point in Soviet history, coercion was the primary method for regulating protest, the Communist government was left in the precarious position of not being able to control mass protest or worse violent riots.

Mark Beissinger believes that one of the reasons very little dissident activity existed during this period was due to the perceived futility in fighting against the Soviet regime particularly for nationalist agendas. “With the exception of networks of dissidents in the Baltic and Western Ukraine working on the political margins and continually subject to arrest and harassment, the overwhelming majority of the population considered the possibility of such a choice outside the sphere of the imaginable.”³⁶ As evidence, out of 185 mass demonstrations identified with 100 participants or more that took place between 1965 and 1986, he found that only 20 raised the issue of secession, and all of these were located in the Baltic. Confident

³⁵ Beissinger, *Nationalist Mobilization and the Collapse of the Soviet State* 333.

³⁶ Ibid. 54.

that so few groups are actively pursuing any type of national independence, Gorbachev sets in motion a series of reforms that allow greater freedom for groups to express their discontent with the economic, social and political situation of the Soviet Union.

Beissinger also argues that over time the mindset of Soviet leaders changed and they could no longer apply force in as brutal a manner that some believed was required to quell populist riots. "Long before the Tbilisi massacres—and well before Gorbachev came to power—the use of severe force as a strategy for maintaining order had been erased from the Soviet elite's understanding of appropriate ways to behave toward opposition."³⁷ As will be shown in the next period, the reality of the situation was that the Soviet Union had no effective method for dealing with protests and mass demonstrations outside of the use of coercion. In many ways, this was the legacy of Stalinism. Rather than strengthen the Soviet Union, Stalin's horrific use of coercive force established a system of control that undermined the persistence of the empire by creating resentment and hatred for the Soviet government. Out of fear of loosing control, Soviet leaders were hesitant to completely eliminate Stalin's structure of coercion and rely on institutions and integration to regulate society.

³⁷ Ibid. 366.

3.4.2 Incoherent Bureaucratic Institutions

Soviet leaders realized that a legal system which indiscriminately imprisoned its citizens would not only hinder economic progress, but would also prevent the emergence of the "new Soviet man." Khrushchev in particular realized that if the Soviet Union was going to persist, it needed to rely more heavily on institutions to create an orderly and predictable society rather than control the population through fear and terror. "Stalin's terroristic methods demonstrated rather conclusively that the regime, itself, would gain little and lose much through the operation of a patently arbitrary and discriminatory judicial system."³⁸

During this period of Soviet history a minimal level of predictability and stability were reintroduced to society. Derek Scott's analysis, however, found that this moderate shift away from pure coercion was still not enough to make a very effective penal system. "Probably to most citizens it all seems too indiscriminate to have the desired deterrent or reformatory effect. The current attempt once again to achieve something recognizable as legality may make for greater efficiency, though it is hard to make any penal system fully effective in a society in which the law is largely unknown and most citizens must, to live and prosper, infringe it in some respect."³⁹ In this analysis, Scott has identified a fundamental flaw in the Soviet political system that will eventually undermine the legitimacy of the Soviet

³⁸ Hulicka and Hulicka, *Soviet Institutions, the Individual and Society* 335.

³⁹ Derek J. R. Scott, *Russian Political Institutions, Minerva Series of Students' Handbooks*. (London: Allen & Unwin, 1958) 246.

government—no consistent adherence to a set of rules especially for selecting successive leaders.

In his analysis of the Soviet bureaucracy in 1980, Gordon Smith found that

The institution of bureaucracy, although “new” and Soviet” more in name than in spirit and character, has served the Soviet regime very well indeed. That regime, now more than 60 years old, has weathered no less than three major changes in political leadership, a number of bitter factional fights within the Communist party of the Soviet Union (CPSU), a radical industrial and agricultural, a devastating purge, and a war of unprecedented destructiveness. Both inside and outside the apparatus of the CPSU, the institution of bureaucracy has been a major factor in consolidating, maintaining, and extending the power of the Soviet regime.⁴⁰

He continues, “By comparison with political elites in the West, the central political bureaucracy in the Soviet Union not only possesses a much greater range and scope of power but also constitutes a largely self-perpetuating ruling group that is more highly politicized and integrated, consensual and relatively homogeneous. Modern elite theory associates these characteristics with political stability and effectiveness but also with the development of oligarchic tendencies.”⁴¹

The state apparatus codified in the Soviet constitution was never free in an institutional sense to make decisions. Nevertheless, the system of soviets and the bureaucratic system of ministries did introduce a certain level of order and predictability to Soviet society. One rationalized aspect of Soviet bureaucracy was

⁴⁰ Gordon B. Smith and American Society for Public Administration, *Public Policy and Administration in the Soviet Union* (New York: Praeger, 1980) 20.

⁴¹ Ibid. 26.

the manner in which individuals joined the bureaucracy. Similar to the organizational structure of Japanese or German bureaucracies, there were entry level positions into the party and the state bureaucratic structure. Scott found that "Service in the soviets is also regarded as a school of government, and this has been offered in explanation of the rapid turnover of members. Service in a local soviet may offer experience of minor leadership in the local community which may lead to higher things, and the chance for the local leaders and promising new recruits to observe one another at work."⁴²

Further, Scott saw that ministry officials and bureaucrats were often trained for specific positions in the bureaucracy. "Institutions under the educational ministries, no less than those under the managerial ministries, are concerned with the training of cadres for more or less specifically envisaged posts."⁴³ Individuals are then competitively selected from these schools for more advanced schooling for their specific ministerial position. "Ministries generally have specialists trained in their own schools of the general educational system. In general the best pupils of the schools of that system, as tested in the state's examinations, are admitted to ministry schools of higher educational standing without further test, and others on the result of a special examination, much as has been done with university admissions."⁴⁴ This

⁴² Scott, *Russian Political Institutions* 110.

⁴³ Ibid. 194.

⁴⁴ Ibid. 193.

organizational structure of Soviet bureaucracy was certainly rational though it was also often undermined by the *nomenklatura* system.

For Gordon Smith the intrusion by the *nomenklatura* was highly destructive to the successful functioning of the Soviet bureaucracy. "For it is, above all, the *nomenklatura* system that prevents the influx of young, highly qualified personnel into leadership positions in the Soviet Union today that bears a large share of responsibility for gerontocratic structure of the Soviet leadership, and that constitutes an important obstacle to upward social mobility in the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics. It is the *nomenklatura*, in short, that today inhibits the rationalization of the recruitment process not only in the party and state apparatus but throughout Soviet society."⁴⁵ Writing a decade before the Soviet Union collapses, Smith seems to sense that this flaw in the Soviet bureaucracy holds the key to the Soviet Union's survival.

At the same time, even though the *nomenklatura* did determine which candidates could be elected and often dictated who would fill ministry positions, the mundane process of electing individuals to the various soviets was nevertheless a routinized and accepted practice. In his study of political participation in the USSR, Matadin Gupta found that the "lengthy and exhaustive process of election to the local Soviet [involves] millions of people and provides one of the most significant

⁴⁵ Smith and American Society for Public Administration, *Public Policy and Administration in the Soviet Union* 47.

occasions for mass participation which, in turn, helps further [strengthen] the legitimacy of the system.”⁴⁶

3.4.3 Developing Transnational Integration

In contrast to the nationalities policy that undermined allegiance to the center, there were many aspects of Soviet society that actually worked to strengthen peripheral acceptance of communist rule. One of these was the Soviet election processes and the political system of soviets. Even though the Communist Party, through the *Nomenklatura*, determined which candidates could be elected and dictated who would fill ministry positions, the process of electing individuals to the various soviets was nevertheless a routinized and accepted practice by Soviet citizens.

As part of the political process, membership in the Communist Party of the Soviet Union provided an avenue for the periphery to participate in the political processes. Gupta's assessment of Soviet political participation in the mid 1980's concludes that “the larger and ‘pluralistic’ representation in the CPSU and its leading organs and local Soviets has been on the increase in the recent decades. The considerable enlargement of membership and varied character of the Central Committee along with the increasing membership of the CPSU is a clear pointer to

⁴⁶ Matadin Gupta, *Political Participation in the USSR: A Study of the CPSU and the Soviets*, 1st ed. (New Delhi, India: Commonwealth Publishers, 1989) 207.

the broadening to the base of policy-making.”⁴⁷ Greater political participation, albeit significantly different than Western practices, has led to greater acceptance of the Soviet rule. This is contrasted by those regions in the Baltics and Transcaucasia where lower levels of political participation has resulted in increased levels of mass demonstrations that demand greater political autonomy and even independence.⁴⁸ While Party membership represented a very small minority of the population, it nevertheless constituted a legitimate avenue through which political elites and even the intelligentsia could participate in the political process of the Soviet Union. More significantly, in opposition to the nationalities policy, the Communist Party functioned as an integrating organization with representation for each of the nationalities.⁴⁹

The Communist Party and the *nomenklatura* also created political systems of education and training that further inculcated the population to Soviet ideology. This is particularly evident in the youth programs and organizations such as the Little Octobrists and the Komsomol. In their study of these Soviet institutions and society, Karel and Irene Hulicka found that few children could “withstand the social pressure to join the Little Octobrists, since most of their peers are members, and many leisure-time activities are centered around the organization. Membership in a party-affiliated

⁴⁷ Ibid.

⁴⁸ Beissinger, *Nationalist Mobilization and the Collapse of the Soviet State*.

⁴⁹ See Table 4 A in Gupta, *Political Participation in the USSR: A Study of the CPSU and the Soviets* 151.

organization from a very early age constitutes a form of conditioning which inclines the rising generation favorably toward the party.”⁵⁰ They go on to differentiate the role these organization play in the socialization of Soviet society as compared to similar Western organizations. “The party has structured its youth program around the goal of rearing active supporters rather than impotent opponents, and rather than being a source of radical social ideas, as youth in so many systems are, the majority of the members of Soviet youth organizations are active supports of the Soviet regime.”⁵¹

Ultimately, the purpose of state instituted social organizations is to foster allegiance and acceptance of the Soviet system. “The indoctrinational programs of the youth organizations, the school, and subsequently, the job, the trade union, the military service and all cultural and public communication media are designed to instill and bolster belief in the superiority of the Soviet ideology.”⁵² Ronald Suny comes to a similar conclusion about Soviet efforts to socialize and indoctrinate its population. “Given the effectiveness of mass education, the restriction of alternative views and the limited knowledge of the West, as well as the power of the party/state and the system of material and psychic rewards, the Soviet imperial state enjoyed the kind of connection with and support (or at least acquiescence) of the population that was generally uncharacteristic of traditional empires and more familiar in democratic

⁵⁰ Hulicka and Hulicka, *Soviet Institutions, the Individual and Society* 113.

⁵¹ Ibid. 140.

⁵² Ibid. 142.

nation-states.”⁵³ Suny argues that Soviet strategies to integrate the periphery were quite effective in creating legitimacy or acceptance for the Soviet Union, even for some decades (1950s-1970s).

The result of these competing programs of *korenizatsiia* and Sovietization is that most Soviet citizens have conflicting allegiances. Several authors, among them Valerie Bunce, describe a dual citizenship that existed in the Soviet Union where on the one hand membership was associated with the ideological-political community of the empire while on the other hand individuals identified with their national and territorial community. “The dissonance among these in the formation of individual and collective identities meant for example, that if [ideology] was devalued then [nationality and territory] could take precedence.”⁵⁴ Indeed, as socialist ideology failed to deliver on its promises of economic prosperity, the Communist Party began to wither at the center and party officials and elites in the republic quickly turned to national and territorial claims to gain political legitimacy and support from the population. “In the absence of a party monopoly and in the presence of an economic and political landscape that was both more competitive and in disarray, socialism, as it had been constituted in the Soviet Union, could not survive.”⁵⁵

⁵³ Suny, “Russia, Empire, and the New Neighbors,” 23.

⁵⁴ Bunce, *Subversive Institutions: The Design and the Destruction of Socialism and the State* 49.

⁵⁵ Ibid. 65.

One of the initial flash points indicating the types of battle that would emerge a decade later occurred in Georgia in 1978 over the imposition of Russian as a national language.⁵⁶ The conflict was over a proposed change to the Georgian constitution that would no longer recognize Georgian as the official language and would allow "the use of Russian, as well as other languages spoken by the people" in all organizations and institutions in Georgia. As a result of organized protest and mass demonstrations, the Supreme Soviet voted to retain Georgian as the official language of the republic. Ironically, there was little need for the Georgian Supreme Soviet to legislate Russian as a common language. Soviet historian Vladimir Kozlov determines that the Soviet Union was becoming linguistically integrated with Russian as the predominant language. "As of 1979, about 215 million people, or more than 80% of the country's total population, either regarded Russian as the mother tongue or had perfect command of it."⁵⁷ This of course makes sense given that most institutions of higher learning were Russian and that anyone who wanted to progress in the Soviet political system or the Communist Party would need to speak Russian.

The conflict over language illustrates two important aspects of Soviet integration strategies. First, as the Soviet population became ever more educated, political participation, especially in local politics was becoming increasingly more

⁵⁶ Alekseeva, *Soviet Dissent: Contemporary Movements for National, Religious, and Human Rights*.

⁵⁷ Valeri i Aleksandrovich Tishkov and Institut *etnografii imeni N.N. Miklukho-Makla*i*a, *National Processes in the USSR: Problems and Trends, "Soviet Ethnographic Studies" Series 10* (Moscow: Dept. of Translated Publications Nauka Publishers, 1991).

important. Elites and intelligentsia expected a voice in many of the decisions instituted by the Communist Party especially those concerning nationality and the economy. Second, the debate over national languages highlights the competing strategies of integration that will eventually tear the Soviet Union apart. While most citizens are committed to Soviet socialist ideology, when faced with choosing between their local, national leaders or the distant and increasingly unresponsive central government, the citizens choose the former. By the end of this period, corruption and incompetence in the Communist Party and an inability to address republic economic and social concerns was weakening support for the center and moving allegiance back to local politics.

3.4.4 Summary

This period of Soviet history is characterized by a high degree of stability and normalcy. While the use of coercion was still widely practiced, it had become more moderated and regulated. Despite some retrogression since Khrushchev's ouster, the Communist regime had also become "more rational and hence less given to excessive use of coercion against dissenters than was Stalin's."⁵⁸ Following the "thaw" of repression under Khrushchev, there was also not an immediate move by any of the republics to reclaim their independence or even demand greater autonomy. Instead,

⁵⁸ Tökés, *Dissent in the USSR: Politics, Ideology, and People* 91.

only a small dissident movement began principally over human rights issues and not for separation from the Union. This period therefore marks the highpoint in the persistence of the Soviet Union.

As a result of the moderate use of coercion, a strong centralized government, and the increasing development of transnational integration the Soviet Union is at the crossroads for establishing a persistent empire. Centralized institutions plagued by bureaucratic inefficiencies and desperately in need of reform, had nevertheless established a fairly predictable and regulated society. The major flaw with the institutions, that will become more apparent during the next period, results from the lack of any consistent process for the selection of successive leaders. The *nomenklatura* system of appointments was cloaked in secrecy and suspicion that combined with coercion created personal allegiances to regional leaders rather than the Soviet political system. Though not completely apparent yet, the patterns of repression spawned anti-Soviet sentiments that were undermining other attempts to build a Soviet identity and generate allegiances to communism

By the end of this period the empire has stagnated. The effects of a command economy have taken their toll as poor social conditions eventually lead to increased demonstrations and demands for reform. Still, complete rejection of the socialist system and the Soviet Union would not occur until well after Gorbachev's government had proved itself completely inept and unable to solve the many economic and social problems facing the empire.

3.5 1986 – 1991: *Glasnost and Perestroika*

This final period of Soviet history addresses the collapse of the Soviet Union. Why did such a powerful state fall apart so rapidly? Did nationalism simply undermine the imperial construct of the Soviet Union? The end of the Soviet Union is often viewed by the West as part of the continuing triumph of the Cold War and the natural outcome of trying to maintain an empire. This was because a weakened and exhausted Soviet Union could no longer repress the simmering nationalism within the peripheral republics. The relaxation of coercive control during *glasnost* and *perestroika* presented the occupied republics with a window of opportunity to break free from the authoritarian rule of the Communist Party and they did so readily and quickly. Upon closer inspection, however, we find that outside of the Baltics and parts of the Caucasus, the Soviet Republics were not determined to separate even as late as the summer of 1991. More importantly, the collapse of the Soviet Union was not simply the result of an inevitable rise of nationalism.⁵⁹

Different analyses of the collapse of the Soviet Union identify social institutions, nationalism, the international system, and even Gorbachev as the principle cause for imperial failure.⁶⁰ This section, however, shows that the collapse

⁵⁹ For detailed arguments supporting this claim see: Lewin, *The Gorbachev Phenomenon: A Historical Interpretation*. McFaul, *Russia's Unfinished Revolution: Political Change from Gorbachev to Putin*. Kotkin, *Armageddon Averted: The Soviet Collapse, 1970-2000*. Beissinger, *Nationalist Mobilization and the Collapse of the Soviet State*.

⁶⁰ Bunce, *Subversive Institutions: The Design and the Destruction of Socialism and the State*; Beissinger, *Nationalist Mobilization and the Collapse of the Soviet State*; Stephen G. Brooks and

of the Soviet Union was the result of institutional failure and a lack of Soviet integration, rather than pressure from the international system or some latent nationalist movement. Ronald Suny concludes that the Soviet Union collapsed “because of the progressive weakening and disunity of the center.”⁶¹ In my analysis, I describe this as the decentralization of the Soviet bureaucracy. Ambassador Jack Matlock compared the role of the Communist Party to that of steel rods used to reinforce concrete structures. He observed that “as long as the Party’s control of the country was assured, as long as the reinforcing rods kept the concrete from shattering, the confidence that national sentiments could not gain the upper hand was justified.”⁶² Here, Ambassador Matlock is describing the transnational ties that formed primarily as the result of a unifying political structure based on a Marxist-Leninist ideology of socialism.

3.5.1 Nationalism and Separation

When Mikhail Gorbachev became Secretary General in 1985, there were few people arguing that the Soviet Union was in the midst of a nationality crisis.⁶³

William C Wohlforth, “Power, Globalization, and the End of the Cold War: Reevaluating a Landmark Case for Ideas.” *International Security*, 25, no. 3 (Winter 2000/01): pp 5-53

⁶¹ Suny, “Living in the Hood”, 17.

⁶² Matlock, *Autopsy on an Empire: The American Ambassador's Account of the Collapse of the Soviet Union* 44.

⁶³ One of the standout exceptions was Robert Conquest. See Robert Conquest, *The Last Empire: Nationality and the Soviet Future* (Stanford, Calif.: Hoover Institution Press, 1986).

Nevertheless, Gorbachev recognized there was a political and economic crisis looming for the Soviet Union. The two leaders previous to Gorbachev had rather abrupt terms in office; the economy was stagnated and appeared to be in decline; and the Red Army was hopelessly bogged down in a quagmire against Afghani rebels. To many, including the younger generation of Soviet elites, socialism appeared to be failing.

Gorbachev knew that reform was necessary in order to prevent the Soviet Union from any further decline in power especially with regard to the other great powers. *Glasnost* and *perestroika* were seen by Gorbachev as ways to encourage healthy criticism and creative solutions to many of the political, economic, and social problems facing the Soviet Union. At the same time, however, these reforms also allowed greater freedom to demonstrate and organize mass protests. Through a process of emulation these demonstrations and protests grew into a tidal wave of nationalist movements that simply overwhelmed the Communist Party.⁶⁴ Mark Beissinger shows in great detail how initial protests in the Soviet Union over poor economic or social conditions were co-opted by regional elites who adroitly developed them into nationalist movements.

The success of initial strikes and protests in standing up against the Party spurred loosely organized nationalist groups into action. Once again, the initial drive for independence also comes from the Baltics and Western Ukraine. Even still, as

⁶⁴ Beissinger, *Nationalist Mobilization and the Collapse of the Soviet State*.

late as August 1991, the majority of the Soviet republics still wished to remain a part of a federated or confederated type of union. As the failure of the Communist Party and central bureaucracy becomes more and more apparent, party elites in the rest of the republics turned to nationalist agendas as a way to build popular support and secure their own political futures.

The collapse of the Soviet Union was also not simply a matter of opening Pandora's Box of nationalism during the period of glasnost and perestroika. Instead, Mark Beissinger finds that it was the established elites, especially in the Slavic and Asian republics, who "adapted to changing circumstances outside the republic brought on by a tide of mobilization, not as the result of the actions of nationalist movements or mobilization by the population."⁶⁵ The populist movements in the Slavic Republics were a top-down drive for a nation-state instigated by Yeltsin and the other Slavic leaders. This is best illustrated by the many Islamic republics which had no nationalist movements primarily because their elites recognized they were better off under Soviet rule.

3.5.2 Role of Coercion

There are differing views on the role force played in the persistence and collapse of the Soviet Union. On the one hand, analysts argue that the Soviet Union

⁶⁵ Ibid. 261.

needed to continue to use force or at least rely on the threatened use of force to keep its periphery in line. This view is captured best by Peter Liberman's work on imperial conquest. He believes that coercion is a successful strategy for making conquest pay and demonstrates quite persuasively that there are many examples where "the conqueror's capability and resolve to inflict harm increases collaboration and the profitability of conquest and empire."⁶⁶ He argues that the primary obstacle to exploiting industrial societies is nationalism and that coercion and repression are effective methods for effectively dealing with this threat. "When conquerors threaten public goods such as national treasures, public buildings, transportation services, or other shared economic, social and moral values, collaboration is often the lesser evil for the nation as a whole."⁶⁷

According to Liberman collapse was not caused by nationalism or some mobilization of "people power", but was the result of the international system exerting external pressures on the regime forcing them to limit their use of coercive control. Further, he shows that the police-state structure of the Soviet Union was not creating huge inefficiencies in the economy or work force, but rather the centrally planned economy was the systemic failure that caused the Soviet Union to collapse. This leaves the possibility that given a market system the Soviet Union may well have been able to maintain its empire. Even so, transitioning to a market system would

⁶⁶ Liberman, *Does Conquest Pay? The Exploitation of Occupied Industrial Societies* 23.

⁶⁷ Ibid. 21.

have required political changes that allowed more freedom of choice for Soviet citizens and potentially invite choices contrary to socialism's aims.

There is a counter argument that finds that the use of force to control the periphery only fueled more protest movements. When dissent and mass demonstrations began to increase in the late 1980's, initial attempts to control the protests with force only stimulated more demonstrations. In his statistical analysis of protest movements, Mark Beissinger demonstrates that there was a serious deterioration in the institutional capacity of the Soviet regime to impose order on its population "as it had traditionally done in the past" and a dramatic increase in challenges to Soviet authority following the Tbilisi massacre. Eventually, this developed into a tidal wave of nationalist movements that simply overwhelmed the central government's ability to maintain order.⁶⁸

Clearly, there is some dynamic of coercion that is missing if both the use and non-use of force can explain the collapse of the Soviet Union. What then explains the changes in the ability of the Soviet Union to use coercion? Do nationalism and the subsequent movements for independence begin to grow because the Soviet Union can no longer contain or repress populist movements? The answer lies with the dynamics of imperial persistence. The system of coercion worked in the short term to establish

⁶⁸ Mark Beissinger uses the analogy of tidal waves created by a tsunami to describe the rise of nationalist protests just prior to the collapse of the Soviet Union. In this case, Stalin's coercive system represents the deep structural conditions while the mass demonstrations are some of the initial tremors that eventually give rise to anti-Soviet movements. See Beissinger, *Nationalist Mobilization and the Collapse of the Soviet State*.

imperial rule, but in the long term undermined the legitimacy of the central government that was created through institutions and integration. Amazingly, even though excessive coercion undermined many of the links that were forged through ideology and victory in World War II, there were still other structural and integrative forces that worked to keep the empire together.

In the end, the struggle that Gorbachev and Soviet elites faced was how to transition from a regime of coercion to a system of legal control. To some degree the bureaucratic and legal structure already existed in the constitution of the Soviet Union and the system of soviets. Unfortunately, when Gorbachev began his reforms, he inadvertently unleashed a wave of protests and demonstrations that were fueled primarily by the poor economic and social conditions of the Union. When he dismantled the coercive structure that maintained order, there was no other legitimate system for the government to reestablish peace and stability.

3.5.3 Disorder and Unpredictability

Previous studies of state political structures from 1800 to present have concluded that “the most durable polities were ones that had undergone a number of minor or gradual changes in authority characteristics” and that “polities which had internally consistent democratic or autocratic traits tended to be more durable than

polities characterized by mixed authority traits.”⁶⁹ Imperial authorities with greater concentration of power, an expansive scope of government action, and very coherent political institutions persist longer, all other things being equal. In the end, the Soviet Union fails to maintain control over its peripheries because the centralized bureaucracy itself fails.

In one of the many ironies about the Soviet Union, Stalin’s successful centralization of party control left a legacy of fear, patronage, and corruption that over time undermined the legitimacy of Communist Party leaders. “By 1938 the mass arrests and executions brought in their wake not only concentration of power at the top and center, but even greater disorder and insecurity.”⁷⁰ This is primarily because Stalin failed to institute a legal or regulated process for succession. Leadership changes at all levels, but especially at the top, often resulted in uncertainty and deep insecurity for party and state officials. As a consequence of the *nomenklatura* control over bureaucratic and party positions, there were no set criteria for selecting new leaders within the party or the state bureaucracy.

Valerie Bunce found this lack of routinization for leadership turnover especially destabilizing for the Soviet Union. Every instance of leadership vacancy was met with a struggle for political power that introduced a high degree of

⁶⁹ Gurr, *Polity II Codebook*, 35.

⁷⁰ Suny, *The Soviet Experiment: Russia, the USSR, and the Successor States* 268.

uncertainty into the system.⁷¹ There was no rational, systemic method for determining who would fill various ministry or even party positions; rather an informal system of patronage and mafia like cliques decided who was “qualified.” This particular aspect of socialism functioned to deregulate the party’s monopoly and to undermine economic growth and the system became unusually “elite sensitive.” “Contrary to its purpose, the institutions of socialism deregulated the system—by pluralizing and thus weakening the party and by homogenizing and thus empowering the society.”⁷² Even though the Soviet Union under Stalin had become a powerful and centralized bureaucracy, the Party became a victim of the *nomenklatura* that allowed power to diffuse and become decentralized over time.

John Slocum comes to a similar conclusion about the lack of cohesiveness in the Soviet political system. “The Soviet federal system created a structure of incentives and opportunities that, in the context of the command-administrative economic system, encouraged the growth of regional ‘mafias,’ local networks of corruption and influence that greased the interlinked workings of government, party and industry, typically extending outward from the desk of regional party secretaries.”⁷³ Based on Slocum’s observation, we find that the *nomenklatura* system undermined the centralized government by fostering an environment where allegiance

58. ⁷¹ Bunce, *Subversive Institutions: The Design and the Destruction of Socialism and the State*

⁷² Ibid. 32.

⁷³ Quoted in Ibid. 51.

to regional party officials was stronger than ties to the center. This was especially the case under Stalin where political ties to center were better described as feudal rather than federal.

Charles Fairbanks' analysis of Transcaucasia reveals a system of informal client-patron relationships that can be traced back to Stalin and Beria and their friends in Georgia.⁷⁴ Fairbanks found that rather than follow the policy directions handed down from Moscow through a chain of command, the republics eventually responded primarily to the directions of local party officials. Bureaucratic corruption and extreme practices of patronage encouraged allegiance to local and regional officials and initiated fractures with the centralized powers. Not too surprisingly, Transcaucasia was also one of the first regions to declare independence when the central bureaucracy failed to intervene during ethnic conflicts in the late 1980s. Alexeeva and Chalidze conclude in their report on Soviet dissent that a possible solution to national unrest in the USSR was to legalize the means for social opinion along with an acknowledgement by the authorities that they wish to resolve the grievances similar to what occurred in Georgia in 1978 over the national language.⁷⁵ The problem is that the central government was simply incapable and often unwilling to address the deep social and ethnic problems prevalent in these republics let alone try to solve them.

⁷⁴ Charles H. Fairbanks, Jr. "Clientelism and the Roots of Post-Soviet Disorder" in Ronald Grigor Suny, *Transcaucasia, Nationalism and Social Change: Essays in the History of Armenia, Azerbaijan, and Georgia*, Rev. ed. (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1996).

⁷⁵ Alexeeva and Chalidze, "Mass Unrest in the USSR," 385.

3.5.4 Loss of Centralized Power

The failure of the central bureaucracy was the principal reason the Union collapsed. Gorbachev divested the power of the central government before economic reforms had an opportunity to take hold or political structures put in place that could ensure the Soviet people that the central government was in control and that improvements to everyday life would be forthcoming. Gorbachev needed to maintain a concentration of power in the central government, not further divested throughout the republics in order to institute the economic reforms he so desperately desired. As Kotkin observed, "Soviet reforms were carried out by someone willing to sacrifice centralized power in the name of party democracy but hesitant for ideological reasons to support full-bore capitalism."⁷⁶ In short, the Soviet bureaucracy had lost its ability to regulate life within the republics.

Even more disastrous for Gorbachev was his inability to maintain the order and stability enjoyed by Soviet citizens under the authority of the Communist Party and the Central Committee. Soviet society, like most stable social orders, was very wary of reform and few were willing to risk the uncertainty and turmoil that would inevitable result from rapid changes to the economic and political structures. James Baker writes in his memoirs that he was hopeful about the political situation in the Soviet Union, but the "economy was wrecked and humanitarian needs were huge."

⁷⁶ Kotkin, 181.

When reform and changes did come, the results for the Soviet people were often quite devastating.

Boris Yeltsin's personal pursuit of power and desire to rule over the Russian Republic meant he had to undermine Gorbachev's authority and legitimacy. In so doing, he inadvertently undermined the legitimacy of the Soviet Union as well. Discrediting communism and the party at the top of Soviet politics left prospective republic leaders relying on nationalist language to gain legitimacy and popular support. "With Moscow powerless, the economy collapsing and the tax base shrinking, republican leaders had every incentive to seize control of local assets in order to cement their hold over clients and increase their chances of satisfying the electorate's needs."⁷⁷ This was clearly articulated to Baker by Soviet Foreign Minister Eduard Shevardnadze who described a "vacuum" of authority and legitimacy, and tremendous social tensions across the country.⁷⁸

All the elements were in place for the Soviet Union to retain its legitimacy and continue as an empire, but Gorbachev realized that the people could not "go on living like this." Nevertheless, it was still possible for Gorbachev to maintain the legitimacy of the Soviet Union and guide the republics through a transition to a more democratic federation. "The problems were formidable, perhaps insurmountable, yet the

⁷⁷ Lieven, *Empire: The Russian Empire and Its Rivals* 335.

⁷⁸ James Addison Baker and Thomas M. DeFrank, *The Politics of Diplomacy: Revolution, War, and Peace, 1989-1992* (New York: G.P. Putnam's Sons, 1995) 531.

centripetal pull of the center remained competitive until the August 1991 coup.”⁷⁹

The solution was to transform rather than dismantle the old central bureaucracy and the command economy. Like Rome in the first century B.C., the Soviet Union needed administrative leadership that only an “authoritarian, bureaucratic revolution could provide.”⁸⁰ And similar to Spain in the nineteenth century, the first regions to claim independence were the last ones occupied and subdued by the Soviet Union. Those republics lacked the established patterns of political participation necessary to sustain their allegiance to the Soviet Union during Gorbachev’s reforms.

An important aspect of empire persistence that Gorbachev fatally overlooked was the value of the Communist Party as the unifying identity of the Soviet Union. Even further, the Party served to hold together the multiple levels of government located between the republics and the Central Committee. “With the party’s central control mechanism shattered and its ideology discredited, and the tentacles of the planned economy shattered, Gorbachev discovered that the Supreme Soviets of the republics began to act in accordance with what he unintentionally made them: namely parliaments of *de facto* independent states.”⁸¹ Returning power to the individual Supreme Soviets did not have to result in an incoherent bureaucracy. As a referendum in August 1991 demonstrated, the republics were more interested in maintaining the Union than forging independent states. Unfortunately, Gorbachev, in

⁷⁹ Suny, “Russia, Empire, and the New Neighbors, 26.

⁸⁰ Doyle, *Empires* 94.

⁸¹ Kotkin, 81.

his attempt to straddle the middle road, retained a few too many hardliners in the central government and suffered the complete delegitimation of the Soviet central authority during the coup attempt.

If Gorbachev had instituted more moderate economic reforms, the Soviet Union may have been able to make the transition to a more egalitarian, multi-national state. Dominic Lieven surmises that “Had socialist modernity fulfilled its promise, a Soviet empire might also have been sustained by vibrant, rich, imperial high culture.”⁸² Legitimacy for continued Soviet rule was tied to the ideology of communism and its eventual triumph over capitalism. “The failure of economic reform combined with *glasnost*’s revelations about the Soviet past destroyed the legitimacy of communism and Moscow.”⁸³ As Gorbachev succinctly stated in his final address as President of the Soviet Union, “The old system collapsed before a new one had time to start working.”⁸⁴ More accurately, he removed the old system before a new political structure of the Soviet Union could be put in place and accepted by the elites. Without legitimacy for the central government there was little Gorbachev could do, even coercively, to prevent the republics from asserting their own authority and sovereignty.

⁸² Lieven, *Empire: The Russian Empire and Its Rivals* 319.

⁸³ Ibid. 335.

⁸⁴ Mikhail Gorbachev, “Speech of Resignation” in *Suny, The Structure of Soviet History: Essays and Documents* 475.

3.6 Conclusion

How was the Soviet Union able to persist as empire for as long as it did especially during a period of time when all other states were being forced to abandon their imperial possessions? The most common perception is that Communist elites relied primarily on coercion and repression to maintain control of the republics. Fear was the only way the Soviet Union could have possibly kept nationalism from tearing the empire apart. This chapter has argued that the use of force and coercion decreased dramatically after Stalin's death and still the Soviet Union was able to retain control of the republics. This continued persistence could be attributed to some minimal level of coercion that was still being maintained up until the time of Gorbachev. Yet, even under Gorbachev, when force was rarely contemplated or applied, only a handful of republics desired complete independence from the Soviet Union. What then accounts for this continued allegiance to the Soviet Union?

At the time it was formed, the Soviet Union was the most ethnically and nationally diverse state in history. The Communist Party maintained an impressive span of control across two continents ruling over fifteen ethno-national republics and many autonomous regions. Unlike other multi-national federations, however, the Communist Party ruled in a very centralized and authoritarian fashion so that very little decision-making authority was left to the republics. From political appointments, to factory production quotas, to national languages, the Party maintained control over virtually every aspect of Soviet life. To do so successfully

for seventy-four years when all other empires in the world were collapsing is quite remarkable. A dynamic beyond simply coercion and repression was at work to keep the peripheries from rebelling against the Soviet Union for such a long time.

Table 3.1 summarizes my findings about the Soviet Union's use of coercion, institutions, and integration. Earlier, I theorized that the continued reliance on high levels of coercion decreases peripheral acceptance of imperial rule, while centralized bureaucratic institutions and social integration increases acceptance. Further, as peripheries develop socially, politically, and economically, I argued that an empire must rely less on coercion or face increased resistance and complete rejection of the central authority. This chapter shows that contrary to most perceptions, the Soviet Union survived as long as it did because in addition to coercion, the Communist Party also used bureaucratic institutions and transnational integration to develop minimal levels of peripheral acceptance. The Soviet Union's highly centralized imperial bureaucracy increased peripheral acceptance of the central Communist Party and a common ideology, persistent enemies, and programs of social integration strengthened peripheral ties to the center.

	Control	Coercion	Institutions	Integration
1917-1921	Low	High	Weak	Low
1921-1928	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate
1928-1953	High	Very High	Strong	Moderate
1953-1985	High	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate
1985-1991	Low	Low	Weak	Moderate

Table 3.1 Strategies for the Soviet Union

What is difficult to capture with this table are the trajectories and interactions of the various methods of control. At first glance, the Communist Party's ability to maintain control of the periphery appears to vary according to the level of coercion and the strength of the central institutions. What the table does not show, is the extent to which transnational integration was moderating the effects of a failing bureaucracy and the continued reliance on coercion. During each of these periods of time, the potential threat from populist movements seeking national independence or increased autonomy was always a serious concern for Soviet leaders. Most of the dissent in the Soviet Union, however, was not simply about independence or even greater autonomy for the republics, but over civil or human rights. These social movements often coincided or even merged with nationalist demands making it difficult to differentiate those republics wishing to separate and those simply looking for better government. Nevertheless, several regions such as the Baltics, Western Ukraine, and the Northern Caucasus have a long history of struggling against imperialism, first

with the Russian Empire and then the Soviet Union. These moments of dissent indicate that the Soviet Union's policies toward the periphery were increasing resentment rather than building acceptance.

In the end, many of the positive strategies of Soviet imperial control were undermined by policies designed to foster ethnic-cultural identities and reinforce territorial and national differences between the various republics and autonomous regions. Rather than create a Soviet identity, the Communist Party succeeded primarily in creating stronger ethnic and cultural allegiances. This became significant under Gorbachev when the central bureaucracy failed to maintain stability and predictability throughout the union. The increasing presence of separatist movements indicates a growing failure of imperial strategies to efficiently control the periphery. The Communist Party and its bureaucracy lost their authority to govern the Soviet Union and the republics simply claimed their right to secession that was already guaranteed to them in the Soviet Constitution. This was particularly evident in those regions where a lower level of political participation resulted in increased levels of mass demonstrations with elites demanding greater political autonomy and even independence. Bureaucratic corruption and extreme practices of patronage were more prevalent in the Baltics and the Caucasus leading to early fractures with the centralized powers. Again, this was a result of the *nomenklatura* system creating an informal bureaucratic structure that excluded local elites from participating in the political process of empire.

This chapter addressed both the persistence and collapse of the Soviet Union. Using a theory of imperial persistence, I showed that the Soviet Union persisted as empire for as long as it did primarily because of its centralized bureaucracy. The persistence of the Soviet Union was also the result of integration strategies that increased ties between the center and the periphery. These ties are clearly evident in the desire of most of the republics to remain part of a union, despite the fact that the central government was clearly struggling. Similarly, I found that the empire collapsed because the bureaucracy was no longer able to provide the order, stability, and economic prosperity expected by the periphery. While nationalism clearly played a role in the demise of the Soviet Union, it was not the causal factor. Instead, a corrupt and increasingly decentralized bureaucracy resulted in a central government that could no longer resolve the deep economic and social issues of the republics, particularly among ethnic groups fighting over territorial rights.

Ultimately, poor economic and social conditions gave rise to increasing numbers of protests that eventually undermined the legitimacy of the Communist Party elite leaving republic party leaders with little choice but to sever ties with the center. The Soviet Union benefited from the use of bureaucratic institutions and a fairly coherent political ideology that created links between the center and most of the periphery. These ties were sufficient enough to maintain the empire more efficiently and for a longer period of time than coercion alone would have allowed particularly during the 1960s and 70s. The few republics and autonomous regions that initially determined to separate were some of the last regions added to the empire and they

had been ruled principally through coercion. More importantly, the Communist Party failed to develop transnational integration within these regions especially among the political elites. Local bureaucratic institutions often functioned autonomously from the central Soviet bureaucracy leaving almost no ties to the center.

Gorbachev's dismantling of the communist party and the loss of power for the central government resulted in an inability to provide order, prosperity and more importantly security for the republics. Further, competing policies of nativization and Sovietization failed to develop sufficient integration to sustain the Soviet Union during the economic and political crises. In the end, there was no longer a well functioning centralized bureaucracy. Gorbachev had little power to regulate events in the republics and was unable to solve or even address the deep social and economic problems facing the republics. Elites and intelligentsia then turned back to their own republics to find solutions to their problems consequently distancing themselves from the central party. They found support and legitimacy for their programs by advocating nationalist platforms and relying on nationalist rhetoric.

CHAPTER 4

CONTROL THROUGH COERCION: THE EASTERN BLOC

4.1 Introduction

In this chapter, I continue my analysis of the persistence of empire by examining the Soviet Union's control over Eastern and Central Europe. This aspect of the Soviet Empire is often referred to as the 'outer empire', the 'sphere of influence', the Eastern Bloc, or even simply the Soviet Empire. Included in this region of the empire are the countries of Poland, Czechoslovakia, Hungary, Rumania, Bulgaria and East Germany. Like the collapse of the former Soviet Union, the dissolution of the Eastern Bloc at the end of the 1980s is often viewed as the inevitable outcome of trying to maintain an empire.¹ The occupation of Eastern Europe at the end of World War II was simply another step in the inevitable process

¹ For specific accounts of how Eastern Europe fits into this model of empire see Zbigniew Brzezinski, *The Soviet Bloc, Unity and Conflict*, Rev. and enl. ed., *Russian Research Center Studies* 37 (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1967), Conquest, *The Last Empire: Nationality and the Soviet Future*, Karen Dawisha and Philip Hanson, *Soviet-East European Dilemmas: Coercion, Competition, and Consent* (New York: Holmes & Meier, 1981).

of imperial overextension that eventually led to decline and then collapse. Thus, the liberation of the captive European states in 1989 was to be expected because empires and their occupying armies are simply not sustainable.

Additionally, the manner in which the Eastern Bloc collapsed, particularly the Solidarity movements in Poland, seemed to show once again that nationalism simply could not be contained forever. Gorbachev's efforts to revitalize the Soviet economy necessitated the withdrawal of the occupying Red Army while *glasnost* and *perestroika* weakened the Communist Party's political hold on the East European governments. In other words, Gorbachev had effectively removed all of the coercive levers that had worked to keep the Eastern Bloc firmly under Moscow's purview. Now the population was finally free to choose their own system of governance and reclaim their lost sovereignty. The Soviet Union had fallen victim to the same phenomenon that plagued other modern empires—nationalism. Soviet leaders were faced with decision of whether maintaining control of a rebellious periphery was worth the cost.

In reality, neither of these accounts is a sufficient explanation for how the Soviet Union maintained control of Eastern Europe as long as it did or why it eventually gave up that control. There is significant evidence to show that nationalist revolts within Eastern Europe were not the driving motivation behind Gorbachev's decision to relinquish control.² The fact that the Soviet Union willingly gave up

² For accounts of Gorbachev's decision to withdraw from Eastern Europe see Stephen G. Brooks and William C. Wohlforth, "Power, Globalization, and the End of the Cold War: Reevaluating

direct control over the Eastern Bloc, was less a failure of empire than it was a failure of the Soviet economic system. Gorbachev was desperate to reinvigorate the Soviet economy and realized that he had to decrease subsidies to Eastern Europe. Eastern Europe had become a drain on the Soviet economy, but not because it was an empire that was over extended. Rather, the command economy of the Soviet Bloc was unable to achieve the efficiencies of a market system and consequently stagnated in growth. For this reason, the collapse of the Soviet Empire in Eastern Europe was not a nationalist revolution per se, but the result of a failed command economy.³

Quite simply, the communist party could no longer provide the economic prosperity that socialism promised and that was anticipated by Eastern Europe. Added to this, there was a growing awareness that Western Europe was faring better than those within the "socialist international" and the population, particularly the workers began to agitate for something better. Just as the collapse of the Soviet Union was not a matter of historical nations striving to break free, historian Raymond Pearson concludes that the failure of the 'outer' Soviet Empire was not simply a nationalist revolt. "Even the classic imperial crises of 1956, 1968, and 1980 onwards,

a Landmark Case for Ideas," *International Security* 25, no. 3 (2000).; Alex Pravda and Royal Institute of International Affairs, *The End of the Outer Empire: Soviet-East European Relations in Transition, 1985-1990*, 1st ed. (London Newbury Park, Calif.: SAGE Publications, 1992).; Charles Gati, *The Bloc That Failed: Soviet-East European Relations in Transition* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1990).; and Karen Dawisha, *Eastern Europe, Gorbachev, and Reform: The Great Challenge*, 2nd ed. (Cambridge England; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1990).

³ Several scholars disagree with this assessment. In particular see Uri Ra'anan, *The Soviet Empire: The Challenge of National and Democratic Movements* (Lexington, Mass.: Lexington Books, 1990).; Conquest, *The Last Empire: Nationality and the Soviet Future.*; and J. C. Sharman, *Repression and Resistance in Communist Europe, Basees/Routledgecurzon Series on Russian and East European Studies*; 4 (London; New York: RoutledgeCurzon, 2003).

all of which featured nationalist motivation to varying degrees, were not simply and exclusively nationalist rebellions against a Soviet 'prison of nations.'"⁴ Instead, these were crises over leadership, stability, and the economic prosperity promised and never realized.

This chapter, therefore, examines the imperial practices of the Soviet Union that both contributed to and detracted from its ability to maintain control over Eastern Europe. Specifically, this chapter traces the use of coercion, centralized institutions, and transnational integration to show that coercion was indeed a dominant strategy but not the only one. I separate the history of Soviet control in Eastern Europe into four different time periods beginning with the occupation in World War II and ending with Gorbachev's decision to withdraw Soviet troops from Eastern Europe. During each period, I look at variations in the level of coercion employed by the Soviet Union, the effectiveness of centralized institutions, and the level of transnational integration. Not too surprisingly, I find that while coercion decreases to a relatively stable level and while some progress toward peripheral integration was achieved, there was insufficient centralized control and transnational integration to sustain the empire for a longer period of time. Stagnating economic conditions led to increased challenges from the periphery and the Soviet Union lacked the resources to resolve these problems. With extremely weak centralized institutions and almost no

⁴ Raymond Pearson, *The Rise and Fall of the Soviet Empire* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1998) 179.

transnational ties holding the Bloc together the empire was susceptible to collapse without the use of coercion to maintain compliance or allegiance.

4.2 1945 – 1953: Establishing Soviet Control

There were many reasons the Soviet Union was interested in establishing control or at least significant influence over Eastern Europe. The most obvious was that the Eastern Bloc countries served as a security buffer zone against the West.⁵ The Soviet Union (Stalin in particular) was rather paranoid about the potential threats from the West. This was not without good cause based on the West's staunch anti-communist stance and the horrific destruction caused by German aggression. The dominant rhetoric coming from Moscow, however, concerned the need to support the ongoing spread of international communism. Under Stalin, this expansion of communism took on a blatantly imperial form that reassembled much of Russia's recent past when it was expanding the Tsarist Empire. Prior to World War II, the Soviet Union's acquisition of Western Ukraine and the Baltics during the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact was clearly an attempt to regain control of former territories of the empire, even if only to increase national security.

⁵ For a list of some of these see Brzezinski, *The Soviet Bloc, Unity and Conflict*;

This initial period of the empire is characterized primarily by the use of coercion. While not at all unusual during the establishment of empire, the following section argues that coercion was not the only mechanism used by the Soviet Union to gain control of Eastern Europe. In the midst of the devastation of the war and the failure of governments to protect, socialism held significant appeal for society as a way to improve individual quality of life. Still, force or the threat to use force, most demonstrably in the form of the occupying Red Army, was quite often necessary to establish centralized control and to put down dissent and rebellion. In the previous chapter, I showed how coercion was an effective method for establishing and even maintaining control for limited periods, but over time undermined the acceptance of Communist rule. This was also true of the Soviet experience in Eastern Europe.

4.2.1 Communist Takeover

So, how was the Soviet Union able to gain control over the countries of East-Central Europe? The most common answer is that as a result of the war, the Red Army was left in control of Eastern Europe. Having recently 'liberated' these countries, the Soviet Union was in the ideal position to now dictate the type of governments that would be reestablished. Despite the presence of Soviet troops, however, Stalin relied on local political parties to achieve a gradual communist takeover of the government. Rather than forcefully install new pro-Soviet

governments, he used the ideas of socialism and the hope for a better way of life along with coercive pressure on the elites to gain control.

There is no way to overestimate the profound impact that World War II had on East Europeans. "Their industrial, agricultural and mineral resources had been systematically plundered and harnessed to the Axis war machine, which also mobilized up to 6 million forced labourers from Eastern Europe."⁶ In the immediate aftermath of the war, society was desperate for some return to normalcy, some hope for prosperity and stability. Prior to the war, many of these countries were fledgling democracies that had only recently been liberated from imperial domination at the end of the First World War. "The status of the Soviet Union as the principal liberating power in the region, as the Eastern victor over fascism and the builder of a 'brave new world' played an important role in the expansion of communist power and Soviet influence in Eastern Europe."⁷ European historian Robert Bideleux also finds that East European support for communism and their attraction to the Soviet model developed from the devastating failure of previous regimes and the political system to secure peace and prosperity. "In the wake of the political and economic *debacle* brought about by the defeat of fascism, millions of unemployed or insecure workers almost inevitably turned to communist movements that seemed capable of delivering a huge expansion of industrial employment and massive upward social mobility on

⁶ Robert Bideleux and Ian Jeffries, *A History of Eastern Europe: Crisis and Change* (London; New York: Routledge, 1998).

⁷ Ibid. 525.

the Soviet model.”⁸ As a result, there was widespread support for radical social and economic change so that, similar to the Russian revolution and civil war, the communist parties gained power through more than simply overt coercive force.

The principal method Stalin used to gain control of other state governments was through incremental personnel changes in key positions of the communist party and the government. Communist parties gained ‘majorities’ through deft political maneuvering and the cautious use of force. In the words of Polish writer Czeslaw Milosz,

To understand the course of events in Eastern and Central Europe during the first post-war years, it must be realized that the pre-war social conditions called for extensive reforms. It must further be understood that Nazi rule had occasioned a profound disintegration of the existing order of things. In these circumstances, the only hope was to set up a social order which would be new but would not be a copy of the Russian regime. So what was planned in Moscow as a stage on the road to servitude was willingly accepted in the countries concerned as though it were true progress.⁹

Under the banner of progress and the promise of socialism, Stalin was able to gain access to the political movements of Eastern Europe. Eventually he would cement his take over through political purges, terror, and the use of force.

Elites were selected and controlled by the communist party apparatus and answered primarily to Moscow. For example, even though Hungary was rhetorically

⁸ Ibid. 526.

⁹ Czeslaw Milosz, *The Captive Mind*, trans. Jane Zielonko, 1st ed. (New York: Knopf, 1953) viii.

only part of the Soviet Union's 'sphere of influence' it is clear that from the very beginning Moscow was very much in control of Hungarian politics. Primarily, Moscow concentrated on the key leadership positions of the communist party general secretary and the government's prime minister. Every leader was selected (and to varying degrees manipulated) by Moscow. The fact that the Soviet Union exercised sufficient control to make political changes and did so overtly indicates formal imperial control. This was therefore more than influence, but the actual manipulation of who governed each of the countries. Just as with the republics in the Soviet Union, local communist parties were used to establish control. Moscow selected the head of the party and they in turn organized the government along a Stalinist pattern.

Eager to establish obedience and stability, Moscow put in place a series of leaders that would hopefully remain loyal to Moscow yet satisfy popular demands. The logic behind Soviet changes to leadership in the Eastern Bloc was to maintain the stability of the East European societies. When the Eastern regimes were threatened by large protests or revolutions, the Soviet Union would step in (sometimes with force) and install new leaders. The challenge was to find leaders that would not only appease popular demands, but at the same time remain loyal to the Soviet Union. Ironically, this meant that Soviet leaders were often faced with reversing their own decisions having to bring back a previously discredited leader who was unfortunately more popular and potentially still loyal to the Soviet Union. In true communist dialectic fashion, party leaders were faced with the need to demonstrate allegiance to the Soviet Union externally while distancing themselves from the Soviet Union

internally. "However much each East European regime depended on Moscow for survival, its domestic authority and hence its ability to govern is a function of its ability to put distance between itself and the Kremlin."¹⁰ This dilemma was the result of a basic incompatibility between Soviet and East European national interests. East European elites wanted to pursue national forms of communism, while the Soviet Union viewed nationalism as a bourgeoisie attempt to undermine communism. To ensure Soviet interests triumphed over nationalist agendas, troops were stationed in nearly every country while political and military party advisors ensured close control of the indigenous militaries as well.

Thus, the Soviet Union was able to gain control over Eastern Europe through a combination of coercive force and the devastation of war that left political elites searching for a new economic and political system. As an interesting aside, the communist parties in France and Italy enjoyed much stronger popular support than the parties in Eastern Europe, but Stalin could not assist these revolutionary movements directly with any type of coercive power. Further, given the post war occupation and the balance of power in Europe, Stalin was not in a position to simply 'takeover' the East European countries. As much as he may have wanted to annex these countries to the Soviet Union (like the Baltics) the reality was that he was not willing to incur the backlash that would arise from such an action. He was very

¹⁰ Charles Gati, *Hungary and the Soviet Bloc* (Durham N.C.: Duke University Press, 1986) 3.

aware of the balance of power in an occupied Europe and the obvious Allied reaction to his desire to formally control Eastern and Central Europe.

4.2.2 Stalinism

The establishment of Soviet control over Eastern Europe relied almost exclusively on the persuasiveness of Communist ideology and the political power of Stalin. Zbigniew Brzezinski's landmark analysis shows that the East European communist leaders had been exposed to international Communist activity, either as Comintern agents or as revolutionary leaders, in an era dominated by Stalinism. "As a result, among other wise very diverse nations the ruling elites shared a similar schooling, similar patterns of experience in organizing and viewing reality, and finally, similar operating and bureaucratic methods."¹¹ The political dependence of the new regimes on the power of the USSR was secured by the Stalinist methods of terror and repression already in wide use throughout the Soviet Union. This meant that "a far greater degree of Soviet involvement would be necessary, with one of its costs being a further decline in the domestic sources of support for the Communist parties."¹² This was because Stalin insisted that all the communist countries conform to Soviet patterns of governance and economic development.

¹¹ Brzezinski, *The Soviet Bloc, Unity and Conflict* 494.

¹² Ibid. 64.

The primary mechanism by which the Soviet Union maintained control of the periphery was the communist party. Karen Dawisha describes the relationship between the Soviet and East European communist parties as the “linchpin” of the Soviet Union’s hegemonic position in the bloc.¹³ In reality, the relationship was far more than simple hegemony. Using political and military advisors, the Soviet Union intervened regularly in domestic affairs and routinely held the final vote on senior party and ministry leaders. The Communist Party also fostered a collective loyalty to socialist internationalism that facilitated and legitimized the continued development of formal and informal mechanisms that further constrained state sovereignty throughout the Eastern Bloc.¹⁴ Other techniques used by the party included continued high-level consultations, Soviet training of bloc personnel and close monitoring of events in each of the East European countries. The party was central to Moscow’s continued ability to influence, monitor, and control the Eastern Bloc.

Brezinski’s analysis of the communist takeover in Poland provides a similar explanation about the expansion of Soviet power. In Poland, for example, the political regimes already under Communist control and directly sponsored by the Soviet Union succeeded in gaining more influence by creating new patterns of economic and social relations. Brzezinski writes, “The foundations for a ‘People’s Democracy’ were thus laid through a blend of political and economic policies: through terror and reform, by giving land to the peasants and expropriating the large

¹³ Dawisha, *Eastern Europe, Gorbachev, and Reform: The Great Challenge* 85.

¹⁴ Ibid. 86.

and medium entrepreneurs, by appealing to Polish nationalism against the Germans and destroying those wishing to assert Polish independence against the USSR.... The consolidation of power was in this manner linked with the initiation of an internal transformation. But both had to proceed at a relatively cautious pace because Western attention was focused on Poland to a far greater degree than on any other country in East Europe.”¹⁵ He continues by describing what he believes were the five links that formed the chain of imperialism.

The first link in the informal chain of imposed political control was direct consultation between the Soviet leadership and that of the countries concerned. The second was the permanent supervision of domestic events through reliance on the Soviet ambassadors. The third link was a close contact with various party organs particularly those dealing with ideological matters, through frequent exchange of experts and visits of Soviet ‘advisors.’ The fourth tie was the direct penetration of those governmental institutions particularly important as the instruments of power and force. And the fifth was the isolation of the various Communist states from the rest of the world and from one another. All of this was buttressed by Soviet military might, both in the potential and the actual sense. These controls, unlike the autonomously operative ones, were subject to purposeful Moscow direction.¹⁶

Karen Dawisha finds that “Stalin did not view his relations with the bloc as being the domain of *international* politics. Rather, he saw relations with these countries as an extension of *domestic* Soviet politics.”¹⁷ Soviets occupied key positions throughout each of these countries particularly within the military and

¹⁵ Brzezinski, *The Soviet Bloc, Unity and Conflict* 14.

¹⁶ Ibid. 117.

¹⁷ Dawisha, *Eastern Europe, Gorbachev, and Reform: The Great Challenge* 83.

security structures. "The means used included direct interference by Stalin, control by Soviet emissaries, emplacement of Soviet liaison officers in key political positions in the security services and in the military, and, of course, extensive cooperation by pro-Moscow factions within the East European communist elites."¹⁸ In other words, the Soviet Union was using common imperial practices such as practiced by the British or the French that permitted minimal levels of local control that were then monitored and regulated by Soviet proconsuls.

4.2.3 Lack of centralized institutions

As political power shifted toward the end of World War II, the East European population in general and the elites specifically rejected previous forms of governance that included democracy, capitalism, and even the church. Instead, they embraced a "New Faith" and turned to Marxist-Leninist ideology and the Communist Party. Milosz provides us with a sense of the popular perception of the Party at the time. "Given post-war circumstances, the Party was the only power that could guarantee peace, reconstruct the country, enable the people to earn their daily bread, and start schools and universities, ships and railroads functioning."¹⁹ In other words, only the Communist Party was able to provide the order and stability that the people craved after so many years of devastation and destruction.

¹⁸ Ibid. 84.

¹⁹ Milosz, *The Captive Mind* 98.

The acceptance of Soviet control by the East European periphery was also enhanced by establishment of international communism. "The founding of the Cominform was the Soviet response to the challenge presented by the phase of diversity. It was to initiate the transition to more common patterns of development for which the necessary basis had been laid by the popular fronts, by national appeals, by the mobilization of the working class and by the beginning of social and economic transformation."²⁰ Still, during this phase of Soviet domination, there were no centralized institutions charged with regulating affairs between the Bloc countries or with the Soviet Union. The Communist Party of the Soviet Union (CPSU) provided the only centralized link with Eastern Europe and this was controlled exclusively by Stalin.

The structure of the empire resembled a classic 'hub-and-spoke' imperial arrangement with a "divide and conquer" strategy. Stalin established bi-lateral agreements between the Soviet Union and each of the East European countries, but did not permit them to make similar agreements with each other. Travel across borders was highly restricted as East Europeans were kept isolated from the rest of Europe and each other. Further, the Kremlin, with Stalin as the leader, was clearly the hub of the empire. All meetings concerning the leadership and development of the East European countries took place in Moscow. All the important decisions were reserved for Stalin and the party leadership of the Soviet Union. More significantly,

²⁰ Brzezinski, *The Soviet Bloc, Unity and Conflict* 59.

each East European leader depended on the Soviet Union for direction and support out of fear of being imprisoned or replaced. This was a time for the consolidation of power. The government and the bureaucracy relied almost exclusively on the direction and determination of Stalin. In fact, Eastern Europe during this period was controlled in essentially the same manner as the republics of the Soviet Union—through fear and repression.

In reaction to the United State's Marshall Plan, Stalin did establish the Council for Mutual Economic Assistance (referred to as Comecon or CMEA) that could potentially regulate affairs within the Bloc. However, this was simply a symbolic gesture by Stalin to prevent Eastern Europe from accepting aid from the West. He never intended to use this institution to centralize control of the various economic systems or to allow the peripheral states to participate fully in the economic decisions of the alliance. Except for a few initial meetings, the CMEA remained dormant over the next decade until Khrushchev attempted to revitalize the institution. As a result, outside of the communist party, there were no political institutions that could legitimate Soviet control of domestic and foreign policies.

There is even strong evidence to suggest that the East European politburos were an informal part of the central Soviet nomenklatura and that the Kremlin actively participated in decisions on promotion and demotions.²¹ This only reinforces

²¹ George Schopflin, "The Political Structure of Eastern Europe as a Factor in Intra-bloc Relations." In Dawisha and Hanson, *Soviet-East European Dilemmas: Coercion, Competition, and Consent* 78.

the conclusion that the Soviet Union had established an imperial relationship with the Eastern bloc countries, but that it was not moving in the direction of a more persistent empire. There was no constitutional structure that allowed local elites to participate in the political processes of the empire. Instead, the system relied on personal relationships within the party and appointments depended on anticipated personal allegiance to Stalin. Just as in the Soviet Union, this hyper-centralization of power and reliance on coercive terror set the conditions for developing a very unstable and highly unpredictable empire.

4.2.4 Socialist Internationalism

Even though Soviet presence and influence in Eastern Europe were significant, Stalin's control was still limited by other great powers in the region.²² As a result, Stalin took a more cautious rather than revolutionary approach to installing communist governments in the occupied East European states. Polish writer Czeslaw Milosz describes the Soviet Union's patient approach that deceptively seemed to support the nationalist agendas. "Not too much pressure was exerted; no great demands were made on anyone. National flags flew in the cities, and the arrests of members of the Home Army were carried out quietly. There was a determined effort to grant sufficient outlets for patriotic sentiment. The catchwords were *freedom* and

²² In an agreement between Stalin and Churchill detailed percentages of five countries that Britain and the Soviet Union would have influence over following the war were stipulated. For further discussion of the agreement see Gati, *Hungary and the Soviet Bloc* 28-32.

democracy.”²³ Clearly, communist control over Eastern Europe was not established merely through occupation and direct Soviet control, though that did play a significant role. In an initially successful effort to “contain” nationalism, the Soviet used a combination of expedient constitutional recognition of national identity and ruthless executive repression of non-Soviet activism.²⁴

Transnational integration during this period was exclusively the result of ideology. Milosz’s perspective on the process presents a Soviet Union that hoped to gain acceptance and legitimacy through direct socialization.

Everything takes us back to the question of mastery over the mind. Every possible opportunity for education and advancements is offered to the more energetic and active individuals among the workers. The new, incredibly extensive bureaucracy is recruited from among the young people of working-class origin. The road before them is open, open but guarded: their thinking must be based on the firm principles of dialectical materialism. Schools theaters, films, painting, literature, and the press all shape their thinking.²⁵

These are exactly the kinds of programs that empires must rely on in order to build integrative ties with the periphery. Milosz continues by noting the particular effectiveness of local soviets that he refers to as “clubs”. They exist “in every factory, every school, every office. On its walls hang portraits of Party leaders draped with red bunting. Every few days, meetings following pre-arranged agendas

²³ Milosz, *The Captive Mind* 156. (emphasis added)

²⁴ Hechter, *Containing Nationalism*.; Pearson, *The Rise and Fall of the Soviet Empire* 179.

²⁵ Milosz, *The Captive Mind* 189.

take place, meeting that are as potent as religious rites.”²⁶ He compares these “meetings” to the ceremonies of the Catholic Church which induce a state of belief from the power of collective suggestion rather than individual belief.

While likely overstated, a minimal degree of legitimacy or acceptance was developing because of continued participation in the “rites” of the state.²⁷ During this period East Europeans were somewhat receptive to Soviet leadership because they believed they formed part of the socialist international not necessarily the Soviet Empire. Further, they were deluded into believing that they would be able to maintain their cultural and nationalist aspirations while still forming part of the socialist international. They could be communist, without being Soviets. The illusion would not last long and eventually these nascent integrative ties of Soviet style socialism would fade away.

4.2.5 Summary

Overall, this initial period of Soviet control over Eastern Europe was characterized by a heavy reliance on Stalinist coercion with fairly moderate levels of transnational integration gained from a perceived common socialist ideology. The attempts by the Soviet Union to develop and spread socialist internationalism are

²⁶ Ibid.

²⁷ Lisa Wedeen describes similar instances of organized symbolic coercion in Syria. See Lisa Wedeen, *Ambiguities of Domination: Politics, Rhetoric, and Symbols in Contemporary Syria* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1999).

viewed as part of the imperial process of transnational integration.²⁸ Relying on the ideology of Marxism and the appeal of a progressive Communist Party, the Soviet Union was able to command some limited allegiance from its East European allies. Initially, this type of integration was fairly effective. In fact, this period marks the highpoint for Soviet transnational integration with Eastern Europe.

What was missing from this period was any type of formal institutional structure (apart from Stalin) that could regulate Soviet-East relations and eventually allow for increased political and social participation by the East European elites. The creation of the Council of Mutual Economic Assistance and the Cominform were not designed as centralized institutions that could establish coherence, predictability and transparency for continued Soviet rule. In fact, Stalin would remain the primary source of coherence and consistency in the daily conduct of the empire. Apart from Stalin, the empire would not only struggle to maintain control over Eastern Europe, but the Soviet Republics as well. During the next period, crises in the Eastern Bloc arise in part because of the dependence on Stalinism and the lack institutions of regulating succession and governance. The next section traces the crises that result precisely because of the unpredictable nature of future Soviet-East relations.

²⁸ In Chapter 2 I presented several different methods for building transnational integration including socialization through education, the military or even through bureaucratic training. In addition, empires can also use ideology or common interests such as economic development or religion to attempt to build ties with the periphery.

4.3 1953 – 1968: *Ambiguities of Soviet Control*

At the beginning of this period, the Soviet socialist model that had worked so well to gain Eastern Europe's allegiance no longer satisfied the social and economic agenda of local leaders or elites. There was increased agitation, particularly in Hungary and Poland, over the type of economic and political system the Eastern Bloc countries wanted to pursue. Ultimately, the Soviet Union had to resort to force in Hungary and threaten to do so in Poland in order to reestablish control and complicity in these countries. However, with the death of Stalin, the Soviet Union becomes interested in reinvigorating socialist internationalism and Moscow begins to search for other means to legitimate its leadership of the Soviet Bloc. The Soviet Union began to recognize the need to legitimize its rule in Eastern Europe by using institutions to gain consensus and by seeking greater ties through social and economic integration with the Eastern Bloc.

This period of the Soviet Empire, however, is the most unstable and uncertain of the four periods. It is also a defining moment for the persistence of the empire beginning with the difficult transition from Stalinism to a more regulated and predicable form of government. The Communist Party of the Soviet Union must resolve the problem of leadership succession and clearly define the relationship between the Communist party and state apparatus. During this time, the Soviet Union will be challenged by 'counter-revolutions' in Hungary, Poland, and Czechoslovakia; it will lose its influence over Yugoslavia; engage in ideological and territorial

conflict with communist China; and, loose significant control over Romania. All of these crises can be linked to a lack of formal institutions and a centralized bureaucracy that not only ensures political stability and continuity during leadership accession, but provides predictability and direction for the empire's population.

4.3.1 Crisis of Leadership

Stalin's death in 1953 marks a significant turning point in the Soviet Empire. His death created a leadership dilemma for the Kremlin. During this period of Soviet control, Robert Hutchings finds that a lack of formal institutions "designed to facilitate relations among its member states" meant that the "Stalinist pattern of rule, therefore, could not survive its leader" resulting in a period of instability in both the USSR and Eastern Europe from 1953-1956.²⁹ More significantly, the ensuing power struggle for control of the Soviet Union created a vacuum of leadership in the bloc that left East European leaders with a conflicting set of signals. "First they were to implement the economic 'new course' and the principle of collective leadership, then they were to sabotage those reforms and restore order, and finally they were to condemn their Stalinist excesses."³⁰ The next three years would involve political maneuvering by Khrushchev and Malenkov to gain the upper hand and assume the

²⁹ Robert L. Hutchings, *Soviet-East European Relations: Consolidation and Conflict, 1968-1980* (Madison, Wis.: University of Wisconsin Press, 1983) 18.

³⁰ Ibid.

top leadership position in the Soviet Union. The crisis naturally reverberated down to Hungary and the rest of the Eastern Bloc as the two leaders had different perspectives on who should occupy party leadership positions in the periphery.

Elites were especially susceptible to the leadership turmoil taking place in the Soviet Union. Eastern European leaders had become accustomed to receiving explicit policy decisions from Stalin, especially concerning matters of personnel. As Eastern Europe struggled to overcome its continuing poor social and economic conditions, the ambiguity from Moscow seemed to present an opportunity to try new economic and political programs.³¹ Hutchings finds that the crises became especially acute following Khrushchev's renunciation of Stalinism. "Once the previous source of political legitimacy—Stalin himself—had been repudiated, the Hungarian leadership was forced to turn inward to erect a new basis of legitimacy and build a firmer relationship between the rulers and the ruled. That this search took on a decidedly anti-Soviet posture was symptomatic of the forces at work within the bloc."³² In their attempt to reform, leaders continued to receive conflicting, or even worse, ambivalent guidance from Moscow. Consequently, while Soviet leaders wrestled with their own post-Stalin future, leaders in Hungary took the initiative to embark on a program of economic and political reforms that introduced greater plurality to the political process and allowed market mechanisms to function. At least initially, these reforms were deemed acceptable by Moscow who did not as yet perceive the threat they

³¹ Gati, *The Bloc That Failed: Soviet-East European Relations in Transition*.

³² Hutchings, *Soviet-East European Relations: Consolidation and Conflict, 1968-1980* 19.

would pose to the Soviet command system. For a period of time, different paths to socialism were being tolerated.

That toleration would end shortly after Imry Nagy declares a new parliamentary system based on the West. In retrospect, his bold pronouncement on October 30, 1956 seems rather naïve and optimistic, but given the ambiguities of Soviet control, somewhat to be expected. He declared: "In the interest of the further democratization of the country's life, the cabinet abolished the one-party system and places the country's government on the basis of democratic cooperation between the coalition parties as they existed in 1945."³³ The next morning, *Pravda* printed what seemingly was the official blessing of the Soviet government for the events occurring in Hungary. The article even went so far as to declare that the "Soviet government has given instruction to its military command to withdraw the Soviet Army units from Budapest as soon as this is considered necessary by the Hungarian government."³⁴ Unbeknownst to Nagy, however, the Soviet Union had no intention of allowing Hungary to pursue such a radically different path to socialism. The next day Soviet troops crossed the Hungarian border.

Despite Soviet Ambassador Andropov's assurances the next day that the Soviet troops were only there to "safeguard the security of Soviet forces leaving Hungary", Nagy finally recognized that he had been deceived. He called into session

³³ Quoted by Charles Gati in Gati, *Hungary and the Soviet Bloc* 146.

³⁴ Ibid. 148.

the executive committee of the Communist party and obtained support for a declaration of Hungary's neutrality and withdrawal from the newly formed Warsaw Treaty Organization. He also appealed to the United Nations. There was no opportunity for negotiation with Moscow and it was only a matter of days before Soviet forces occupied the Parliament building and ended the revolution. Charles Gati's analysis of the Hungarian crises concludes that the Soviet Union's motives for crushing the Hungarian reformists resulted from a fear of losing control. "Soviet leaders had to respond by force to overcome their fear of all the uncertainties Hungary implied. Among these uncertainties, the fear of losing control over the bloc, and then being seen by the West as weak, appeared to be their compelling reason to act."³⁵ More importantly in the post Stalin struggle over Soviet leadership, the Hungarian "counter-revolution" provided an opportunity for Khrushchev to demonstrate his effectiveness as *the* Soviet leader. His success in reestablishing Soviet supremacy gained him the needed support to overtake Malenko in the battle for control of the Kremlin.

Soviet resolve to use force also seems to have been rather effective in stemming another potential uprising in Poland. The Soviet Union is spared a similar military invasion into Poland in part because of what happens in Hungary. In fact, the Soviet Union will not face another direct challenge to its leadership until the Prague Spring in 1968 and that will be less about Soviet leadership as it is about economic reform. Following the uprisings in Hungary and Poland, the Soviet Union

³⁵ Ibid. 154.

attempted to 'normalize' relations with Eastern Europe. For the most part this included slightly increased autonomy for the East European leaders and some initial attempts to give the elite a greater role in the politics of the empire.

In Hungary, the newly installed leader, Janos Kadar successfully managed to restore order while demonstrating allegiance to the Soviet Union. Charles Gati refers to his reforms as *Kadarization* which was both a "product and a process" that achieved political and economic reforms through a personal style of decision-making that related to the both the Kremlin and the local population. With regard to the Hungarian population, it seeks less the enthusiastic or even active support of the population than its passive tolerance. The result was a population that was simply resigned to believing that Hungary had come to have the best it could have "under the circumstances."³⁶ Not too surprisingly, this post conflict period becomes the model for future Soviet bloc leaders intent on pacifying their societies after similar periods of nation-wide unrest.³⁷

4.3.2 Nascent Institutions

This period of time will also witness the creation of the Warsaw Treaty Organization and the revitalization of the Council for Military and Economic

³⁶ Ibid. 160.

³⁷ Jacques Rupnik, "The Military and 'Normalization' in Poland", in Paul G. Lewis and State and Society in Eastern Europe Research Group., *Eastern Europe: Political Crisis and Legitimation* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1984) 170.

Assistance. Unfortunately, these initial attempts at formalized central control were not sufficient enough to prevent further challenges to Soviet domination. Romania continued to distance itself from Moscow and Czechoslovakia attempted its own counter-revolution. Eventually, the Soviet Union created the Warsaw Treaty Organization and the Council of Mutual Economic Assistance. Both of these institutions were merely reactions on the part of Stalin to what was occurring in Western Europe. Both remained essentially inactive until after the Hungarian revolution. Again, Moscow will be faced with having to use force in order to reestablish its control and ensure allegiance from these countries.

The Warsaw Treaty was not signed until 1955 and for the next five years the Pact was little more than a shell of an organization. Instead the Soviet Union continued to rely on bilateral agreements with each of the East European countries to maintain control. Practically, this meant renewed meetings of the Political Consultative Committee and a revitalization of the CMEA. Nevertheless, considerable coercive force remained in place as a reminder of Soviet resolve to maintain its influence in the region. The only country that seemed able to remain somewhat aloof was Romania. During this period, Ceasecu began to move away from Soviet policy and insulate the country from direct Soviet control. Very much a model of Stalin, he was able to secure a considerable amount of autonomy because he satisfied Moscow's need to have a stable and somewhat benign neighbor.

Brzezinski found the lack of formal institutions very problematic for the continued persistence of the Soviet Bloc. "A political system structured on suspicion and with a predilection toward personal violence could not develop organizational techniques such as those characteristic of the Weberian notions of a rational bureaucracy. Political controls within the bureaucracy, controls to check the controls, and general bureaucratic hostility toward the masses resulted in a system in which an expanding and rather inefficient bureaucracy lost all concern with human values and showed only occasional spurts of vitality whenever a 'class enemy' was spotted."³⁸ Brzezinski's analysis in 1967 concluded that the development of tighter political bonds within the Warsaw Treaty, such as turning it into a "Commonwealth Politburo" may be one answer to creating stronger ties within the Soviet Bloc.³⁹

The lack of rules for succession was dramatically demonstrated following Stalin's death. "Stalin was not merely the Soviet dictator but also the leader of the international Communism."⁴⁰ As one Western analyst has observed, the early alliance system was far superior to the WTO from a Soviet point of view. It was completely centralized but had no central staff.... It was a completely integrated system. All the participating states adopted Soviet regulations and training manual, armaments, equipment and even styles of uniform."⁴¹ Unfortunately, this system

³⁸ Brzezinski, *The Soviet Bloc, Unity and Conflict* 141.

³⁹ Ibid. 500.

⁴⁰ Ibid. 156.

⁴¹ Hutchings, *Soviet-East European Relations: Consolidation and Conflict, 1968-1980* 22.

could only survive as long as its leader. "With Stalin gone, and the post-Stalin circumstance producing greater diversity, the Stalinist method of informal political ties had to be buttressed through formalization."⁴²

During the 1956 crises with Hungary and Poland, Soviet leaders discovered that "their doctrine was rich in guidelines for coping with enemies but that it offered little for resolving conflicts and organizing relations among Communists states." This is because the empire lacked any centralized institutions that had the authority to regulate interstate commerce or determine the strategic direction of the bloc. Brzezinski notes that the "mere similarity of institutions and socioeconomic structures was not enough to guarantee unity."⁴³ It is difficult to not overemphasize the importance of Stalin for maintaining the Soviet Bloc. The subsequent competition for power within the Soviet Union produced immediate and broad disagreements on domestic Soviet policy and consequently left Communist leadership in the neighboring states to their own resources.

The Council for Mutual Economic Assistance (CMEA) had remained dormant since its creation in 1949. For Stalin, the CMEA was primarily an alternative to the Marshall Plan and the international economic institutions formed under the Breton Woods Agreement. It was definitely not an economic executive for regulating or reorganizing economic relations among the socialist nations since Stalin's power was

⁴² Brzezinski, *The Soviet Bloc, Unity and Conflict* 173.

⁴³ Ibid. 267.

the only unifying factor of consequence. Following his death, there is a move to create institutional ties with Eastern Bloc. "The summer 1953 riots in Pilsen (prompted by a currency reform) were a warning to the regime of the potential dangers involved in maintaining economic Stalinism."⁴⁴ In 1954 the CMEA was reactivated and underwent a process of increased institutionalization. This included the creation of an authoritative CMEA executive that was granted greater autonomy to determine monetary and trade policies within the empire. A plenary meeting of CMEA in Moscow in January 1958 "marked a determined bid to integrate economically that which was proving ideologically and politically divisive."⁴⁵ "A broader task, however, was to be performed by the Council of Economic Mutual Assistance (CEMA), so neglected in the past by Stalin. Indeed, it is remarkable that the Soviet leadership had ignored this potentially most promising method of binding the Communist states together. It was again mute testimony to Stalin's dependence on political solutions, and CEMA's reactivation was a compliment to Khrushchev's perceptiveness."⁴⁶

Ultimately, the Soviet Union failed to institute a centrally controlled organization that could shape the integration of Eastern Europe. Instead, Soviet leaders relied on "natural" forms of ideological cooperation such as "bilateral

⁴⁴ Ibid. 164.

⁴⁵ Ibid. 286.

⁴⁶ Ibid.

consultations, regional meetings, and international conferences.”⁴⁷ The WTO and the CMEA are essentially token attempts to provide some institutional legitimacy to Soviet domination. They remain ineffective until 1968 when crises in Czechoslovakia force Soviet leaders to reexamine the role these institutions can play in regulating foreign policy and developing common economic programs.

4.3.3 Declining Integration

Empires achieve greater persistence through an on-going process of transnational integration. During this period, the exact opposite occurred. Following the Hungarian crises, Khrushchev appears eager to demonstrate that the East European countries are not being “prodded along the path of socialism at bayonet-point by Soviet soldiers.”⁴⁸ He reduced the presence of Soviet troops in Eastern Europe and withdraws completely from Romania. The unintended consequence of this action is that even though “the Soviets continued to cultivate personal ties and loyalties by educating and training large numbers of East Europeans in the Soviet Union, Soviet personal contacts at the highest levels in Eastern Europe had been reduced.”⁴⁹ More importantly with regard to Romania, the withdrawal of forces

⁴⁷ Hutchings, *Soviet-East European Relations: Consolidation and Conflict, 1968-1980* 66.

⁴⁸ Nikita Sergeevich Khrushchev and Strobe Talbott, *Khrushchev Remembers; the Last Testament*, 1st ed. (Boston: Little Brown, 1974) 222.

⁴⁹ Lee Kendall Metcalf, *The Council for Mutual Economic Assistance: The Failure of Reform* (Boulder, CO.: East European Monographs; Distributed by Columbia University Press, 1997) 70.

removes the only mechanism Moscow has for demanding compliance absent an institutional or integrative ties.

Still, the Soviet Union most significant attempts at transnational integration remained primarily with the military. The Soviet Union continued to select and educate the elite officer cadre, and the top military and intelligence elites in Eastern Europe typically received part of their training in the USSR.⁵⁰ Unfortunately, these training programs were the only attempts at developing trans-national integration. To go even further, the Soviet Union needed to foster broader educational opportunities and develop bureaucratic training programs for the CMEA and Warsaw Pact. They needed to develop a more common socialist identity and provide opportunities for East Europeans elites to participate in the decision-making process within the CMEA and the Warsaw Pact. As it was, the various national militaries were the only groups within the Eastern bloc that remained consistently loyal to the Soviet Union. Romania was the one exception that clearly demonstrates this reasoning. Romania maintained an officer corps that was trained entirely within country and that had been purged by Ceausescu in the late 1960s of anyone who was trained or educated in the Soviet Union.⁵¹ As a result, Romanian troops were more nationalistic and more eager to resist Soviet coercive attempts. More importantly, with the backing of the

⁵⁰ Dawisha, *Eastern Europe, Gorbachev, and Reform: The Great Challenge* 103.

⁵¹ Ibid.

Romanian army, Ceausescu frequently took an opposing position to Soviet guidance on foreign policy and often resisted calls for further Bloc integration.

Brzezinski's evaluation of the persistence of the Soviet empire concludes "that without some central power, or eventually authority, the unity rooted in ideology disintegrates under the impact of time, change, specific interests, and differing conditions.... Therefore if ideology is to serve as the basis for unity, it must have an institutional source of sanctioned interpretation and a built-in ideological justification for the existence of that source. This goes considerably beyond a mere reliance on the similarity of socioeconomic conditions and institutions to guarantee identity of view and unity of action."⁵² Simply having similar economic and political structures was not sufficient for maintaining control of Eastern Europe and would not lead to a more persistent empire.

4.3.4 Summary

With Stalin's death, the Soviet Union and the Eastern Bloc experienced a lack of direction and sometimes contradictory policies from Moscow. In the immediate post Stalin period there was considerable controversy in Moscow over the direction the empire would take. Even the question of who would lead the Soviet Union was not settled until 1956 when Khrushchev was able to outmaneuver Malenkov and assert the primacy of the party over the government once again. This lack of stability

⁵² Brzezinski, *The Soviet Bloc, Unity and Conflict* 496.

rippled throughout the empire and left many of the East European regimes uncertain of how they should proceed. "Although a measure of autonomy was permitted to the east European colonies from the 1950s, any major threat to imperial authority brought prompt military intervention and punitive political purges of the offending local establishment."⁵³ While the appeal of social internationalism was still quite strong, growing dissent in both Hungary and Poland revealed that there was increasing resentment to continued Soviet domination.

Stalin's death also highlighted a significant deficiency in Moscow's pursuit of socialist internationalism—no formal, centralized bureaucratic institutions that could regulate and normalize Soviet 'leadership'. His death resulted in ambiguous signals from Moscow and left Eastern Europe looking internally for solutions to their complex economic and social problems. Further, transnational integration had stagnated and was in decline in part because of the use of coercive force against Hungary and Czechoslovakia. Ties between the communist nations were becoming frayed. In short, Stalinism was not a sufficient formula for creating a persistent empire. The demonstrations and 'counter-revolutions' in Poland and Hungary were driven primarily by the lack of direction coming from Moscow, the declining appeal of international socialism, and extremely weak centralized institutions.

At the end of this period, in the wake of another leadership crises and repeated ambivalence from Moscow, Czechoslovakia would initiate economic and political

⁵³ Pearson, *The Rise and Fall of the Soviet Empire* 177.

reforms that again became too threatening for the Soviet Union to ignore. All the instances of direct challenge to Soviet control coincided with leadership changes in the Soviet Union. These challenges to Soviet leadership left Moscow with little recourse other than to use force to reassert its control and demand allegiance to socialist internationalism. Without any overarching supranational bureaucratic institutions to regulate affairs between with the Soviet Bloc, East European leaders were presented with the opportunity to pursue their own political and economic reforms.

4.4 1968 – 1980: Attempting Institutional Control

In the previous section, the process of de-Stalinization ended many of the arbitrary practices of empire and control of Eastern Europe. Still, the initial steps toward centralized institutional control particularly within the Warsaw Pact and the Council for Mutual Economic Assistance, was insufficient to effectively moderate the high levels of instability emanating from the Soviet Union. During this next period, Soviet reforms again failed to centralize control of these institutions. Additionally, the Soviet Union was unable to develop transnational integration between the Soviet Union and the Eastern bloc resulting in highly nationalized societies that remained adamantly anti-Soviet. In keeping with the theory of imperial persistence, this section describes how these conditions adversely affected the longevity of the empire. In

particular, the role of coercion is highlighted as the primary instrument used to secure compliance from Eastern Europe.

4.4.1 Coercive Control

Following the Prague Spring of 1968, the Soviet Union quickly attempted to normalize relationships with Czechoslovakia and the rest of the Eastern Bloc. However, the normalization of relations proved to be less successful than earlier attempts that followed the Hungarian and Polish uprisings in 1956. Jacques Rupnik believes this was partly because the "Czech intellectuals who played such a prominent part during the Spring of 1968 had not been co-opted by the regime."⁵⁴ In 1956, the Soviet Union re-installed Hungarian leader Janos Kadar who had broad appeal throughout the country. He was very successful in gaining the support and allegiance of local party and government leaders while remaining cautiously loyal to Moscow. In Czechoslovakia, however, the Soviet Union initially allowed the popular Alexander Dubcek to reform the party and then impatient with the 'normalization' process, installed Gustáv Husák who aggressively purged the Czechoslovak party of any remaining reformists. Rather than build consensus, Husák relied on Stalinist techniques of repression and terror to demand allegiance and subservience from the population.

⁵⁴ Jacques Rupnik, "The Military and 'Normalization' in Poland", in Lewis and State and Society in Eastern Europe Research Group., *Eastern Europe: Political Crisis and Legitimation* 171.

The effects of coercion were quite pronounced following the Soviet invasion of Prague in 1968. "The people do not seem to have been particularly anti-Soviet before the invasion, and the initial reaction seemed one of surprise rather than hate."⁵⁵ In fact, the reforms in Czechoslovakia were not an attempt to distance the country from the Soviet Union. Following the invasion, however, nationalists would rally around the events of the "Prague Spring" in order to foster anti-Soviet expressions and initiate demonstrations against continued Soviet domination. Romania was also a continuous thorn in Moscow's side perhaps most significantly because there were no Soviet troops stationed there. To deal with Romania's consistent criticism, Soviet leaders would often use the threat of a major military build-up in Bulgaria to induce Ceausescu to adopt a more conciliatory attitude toward Warsaw Pact and CMEA activities.⁵⁶

4.4.2 Limited Transnational Integration

Even though the Soviet Union's reliance on purely coercive measures declined for the most part during this period, increasing economic inefficiency and a recognition of the hollowness of communist ideologies resulted in a lack of acceptance for continued communist, let alone Soviet, rule. Raymond Pearson finds that the Soviet Empire persisted as long as it did because of improvements in living

⁵⁵ Mark Wright, "Ideology and Power in the Czechoslovak Political System." in *Ibid.* 121.

⁵⁶ Hutchings, *Soviet-East European Relations: Consolidation and Conflict, 1968-1980* 155.

standards and the quality of life; flexibility in imperial tactics when dealing with crises by not only using military force, but also changing policy; and, investments from the West that postponed the financial crises of the 1980s. "By accident or design, Western economic intervention in eastern Europe offered the Soviet Empire a financial reprieve and deferred the Soviet supreme crisis by a decade, even though it also ensured that when the inevitable crisis finally came, it would be apocalyptic."⁵⁷ Without this financial support Pearson believes that the "moribund" Soviet empire would have collapsed a decade earlier.

Along with the financial crisis that was looming on the horizon, there were few signs that transnational integration was occurring. Even though Russian quickly became the *lingua franca* of the Soviet Empire and served as the integrative common denominator of day-to-day communication, it was often resisted by patriotic non-Russians.⁵⁸ The use of a *lingua russica* was further hindered by the lack of centralized institutions that could implement the common language. Apart from the military, and to some degree the communist party, there were few organizations or bureaucracies that provided the international environment for East Europeans and Soviets to interact. There is no indication that East European representatives had

⁵⁷ Pearson, *The Rise and Fall of the Soviet Empire* 174.

⁵⁸ Ibid. 178.

much of a political voice in the decisions that were made concerning foreign policy such as détente or deployment of forces.⁵⁹

More significantly, travel between East European countries or even to the Soviet Union was highly restricted and reserved principally for party elites. This greatly hindered economic and social integration. Consequently, during the 1970s, Eastern Europe started to become economically and culturally orientated toward the West.⁶⁰ This restriction on travel reinforced the political and social barriers that existed between East Europeans and Soviet citizens. Along with the suppression of independent news media, there developed a great fear, suspicion, and general distrust for anything Soviet.⁶¹ While the goal of the Soviet leaders may have been to prevent Western influence on Eastern Europe, the effect was to limit *all* outside influence. This type of xenophobic policy served as a breeding ground for nationalism and increased the desire for complete independence.⁶²

Regular contacts among senior Soviet and East European officers, as well as exchanges of military delegations and the training of East European officers at Soviet

⁵⁹ Teresa Rakowska-Harmstone, *Warsaw Pact Political and Military Integration: A Political Analysis* (Palo Alto: Hoover Institution Stanford University, 1990).

⁶⁰ Adam Zwass, *The Council for Mutual Economic Assistance: The Thorny Path from Political to Economic Integration* (Armonk, N.Y.: Sharpe, 1989).; Pearson, *The Rise and Fall of the Soviet Empire*.

⁶¹ Conquest, *The Last Empire: Nationality and the Soviet Future*.

⁶² Fred Cooper gives an excellent description of the difficulty in building identities between empires and their colonies. Frederick Cooper, *Colonialism in Question: Theory, Knowledge, History* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2005). Anthony Marx also describes the role of separation and conflict in developing nationalism. Marx, *Faith in Nation: Exclusionary Origins of Nationalism*.

military schools, promotes a certain Warsaw Pact esprit de corps. "This commonality of experience and interest among senior Warsaw Pact officers, in turn, constitutes a vital element of stability and pro-Soviet solidarity in Eastern Europe."⁶³ Many of the exercises conducted by the Pact were accompanied by extensive propaganda campaigns and are often time to coincide with a political crisis that was developing in one of the East European countries. During pauses of military action, a joint operational group composed of the nations represented during the exercise will organize political and cultural rallies. "The meetings of soldiers and civilians sometimes include performances by choral groups, dance troupes and orchestras."⁶⁴

This socialization of the various militaries leads Hutchings to conclude that "Warsaw Pact joint exercises are primarily instruments of internal cohesion and only secondarily of military preparedness."⁶⁵ And despite these strong indicators that the Warsaw Pact was building transnational integration, he also goes on to say that there are reasons to believe that interaction between the countries was still quite limited. "Even in large multi-national exercises there is little contact among national forces except at the staff level with their allied counterparts rather than as part of an integrated operational force. In this sense, Warsaw Pact exercises are simultaneous

⁶³ Hutchings, *Soviet-East European Relations: Consolidation and Conflict, 1968-1980* 159.

⁶⁴ Christopher Jones, "The Political Administrations of the Warsaw Pact and the Reliability of the East-Bloc Armed Forces," in Daniel N. Nelson, *Soviet Allies: The Warsaw Pact and the Issue of Reliability, Westview Special Studies on the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe*. (Boulder: Westview Press, 1984) 67.

⁶⁵ Hutchings, *Soviet-East European Relations: Consolidation and Conflict, 1968-1980* 153.

rather than 'joint' quite dissimilar from the truly integrated (if occasionally chaotic) multinational NATO war games."⁶⁶ Nevertheless, these events along with common weapon systems, similar command structures, and regular training exercises, indicate that the Soviet Union is making attempts to integrate. In fact, the military stands out as the sole aspect of the Soviet-East relationships that was building any type of transnational integration.

4.4.3 Institutional Reforms

During this period, the Soviet Union also conducted an extensive review and revision to the Warsaw Treaty Organization during a PCC session in Budapest in March 1969. The Soviet Union was interested in creating a more centralized command and control organization similar to that of NATO to prevent any further disintegration of Bloc. The East Europeans, on the other hand, wanted greater participation in the policy decision of the WTO through strengthening of the Political Consultative Committee. In the end, the joint command was given greater authority over Warsaw Pact forces and a committee of foreign ministers was created to give political guidance to that joint command. "The net impact of the Budapest reforms seems to have been to improve the nominal access of the East European members to the levers of Warsaw Pact decisionmaking, while at the same time increasing Soviet

⁶⁶ Ibid. 152.

influence in East European military affairs by expanding the spheres of competence of the pact's command bodies."⁶⁷ These reforms were significant in that they represent the first attempts by the Soviet Union to institute centralized control and foster political integration—at least for foreign policy—among the Eastern bloc countries.

Unfortunately, these reforms were resisted by Romania and Czechoslovakia who wanted even greater participation in the politics of the Warsaw Treaty Organization.⁶⁸ The Soviet Union dominates all aspects of the WTO with an overwhelming presence of Soviet officers who occupy the most critical command and control positions. Additionally, the “omnipresence” of the Soviet Union was assured as some thirty Soviet divisions in Eastern Europe provided a constant reminder that the military might of the Soviet Union was the ultimate guardian of the political status quo in the region.⁶⁹ The role of East Europeans in the formation of policy was still greatly limited.

In 1968, a public radio address by Czechoslovak Lieutenant General Vaclav Prchlik critiqued the organization because East Europeans were only permitted to have representatives to the Joint Command and the representatives “have so far held no responsibilities nor had a hand in making decisions, but rather have played the role

⁶⁷ Ibid. 76.

⁶⁸ Robert W. Clawson, Lawrence S. Kaplan, and Kent State University. Center for NATO Studies, *The Warsaw Pact: Political Purpose & Military Means* (Wilmington, Del.: Scholarly Resources, 1982).

⁶⁹ Gerard Holden, *The Warsaw Pact: Soviet Security and Bloc Politics* (Oxford, UK; New York, NY: B. Blackwell in association with the United Nations University, 1989) 85.

of liaison organs.” He then proposed that the role of the Political Consultative Committee be strengthened by establishing regular periods of for its convening, and restructuring relations so that individual members of the pact “can really assert itself and have its share in the programmatic work of the whole coalition.”⁷⁰ Prchlik is later imprisoned for his outspokenness, but the Soviet Union did implement some of the more minor changes to the organization during the Budapest Conference. Up to this point, the Political Consultative Committee, the main policy organ of the WTO, had primarily been used as a forum for the Soviet Union to hand down foreign policy directives with the appearance of an alliance decision. For example, even though the PCC was required to meet at least twice a year, the reality is that during the 1970s they only meet once every two years. Far too frequent for any of the Eastern European countries to believe they were actually participating in the political process of the alliance.

Institutionally, the centralized structure of the Warsaw Pact remained extremely weak. “Despite a Warsaw Pact Supreme Command, Joint Command, Joint Staff, and other trappings of a genuine wartime military command, the Warsaw Treaty Organization remains in essence an administrative command, analogous to a traditional European War Office and controlled as if it were just another military district of the Soviet Union.”⁷¹ East Europeans also have limited roles in the WTO:

⁷⁰ Hutchings, *Soviet-East European Relations: Consolidation and Conflict, 1968-1980* 68.

⁷¹ Ibid. 154.

they would not take part in any northern operations, possessed no long range bombers, and had only limited naval capacity.⁷² Even more telling, after 1974 the Soviet Union significantly decreased the number of Warsaw Pact exercises.⁷³ Scholars believe this is because the Soviet Union's goal was to entangle the East European armies in their web of control, not to integrate them into the Soviet empire.⁷⁴ Even though the Warsaw Pact was continuing to evolve it still remained primarily a Soviet coercive mechanism for managing bloc alliance and ensuring the stability and survivability of the East European regimes.

The other institution with the potential to build centralized control and extend transnational integration was the Council for Mutual Economic Assistance. Even though Khrushchev attempted to reform the institution, "the underdeveloped economic mechanisms and the limited powers of the CMEA executive body prevented the further development of the CMEA into a functioning integrated community."⁷⁵ In 1971 the "Comprehensive Program for the Further Deepening and Improvement of Socialist Economic Integration of the CMEA Member Countries"

⁷² Holden, *The Warsaw Pact: Soviet Security and Bloc Politics* 88.

⁷³ Hutchings notes that except for the peak period 1968-1972, the Warsaw Pact has averaged about three exercises per year, with even fewer in the period 1975-1979. See Table in Hutchings, *Soviet-East European Relations: Consolidation and Conflict, 1968-1980* 153.

⁷⁴ Zbigniew Brzezinski, "East West Relations and Eastern Europe (an American-Soviet Dialogue)," *Problems of Communism* 37, no. 3,4 (1988).; Clawson, Kaplan, and Kent State University. Center for NATO Studies, *The Warsaw Pact: Political Purpose & Military Means*.; Hutchings, *Soviet-East European Relations: Consolidation and Conflict, 1968-1980*.

⁷⁵ Zwass, *The Council for Mutual Economic Assistance: The Thorny Path from Political to Economic Integration* 80.

was approved at a meeting of the Council in Bucharest. While calling on the member countries to cooperate more closely with each other, the Comprehensive Program failed to establish the requisite institutions and complex economic mechanisms for carrying out such an integration program.⁷⁶ Fundamental to the persistence of imperial control, the Program specifically failed to create any type of supranational executive body that could implement and enforce economic policy apart from the use of coercion.

4.4.4 Summary

This time period of the Soviet Empire is once again characterized principally by coercion. Even though reforms are attempted, bureaucratic institutions remain very weak. They lack the necessary centralization that would have allowed the Soviet Union to regulate the periphery in a more accepted or legitimate manner. Transnational integration was almost completely absent save for interactions within the military structure of the Warsaw Pact. Military education, training and socialization stand out as the highlight of this period. Evidence of the effectiveness of these integrative efforts was demonstrated by the participation of all the "fraternal" armies in the invasion of Czechoslovakia and by the restraint the Polish army showed in managing political conflict during the Solidarity movement.⁷⁷

⁷⁶ Ibid. See Chapter 3.

⁷⁷ Rakowska-Harmstone, *Warsaw Pact Political and Military Integration: A Political Analysis*.

Unfortunately, the strength of the military makes it the only institution that can step in to solve political or social crises. Trained to defeat other armies, the military was not necessarily the best option to solve internal problems. A weak Council for Mutual Economic Assistance provided no opportunities for developing an integrated economy and underwent virtually no changes during this period. East European state ministries were not associated with a central government, Soviet or otherwise, and coordination on economic and foreign policy was virtually non-existent. Like the previous period, compliance from Eastern Europe depended almost exclusively on the threat and continuous presence of Soviet troops.

4.5 1980 – 1989: Reform to Collapse

In an oft repeated pattern, this period begins with instability at the top. Another series of contested leadership changes in the Soviet Union and the Communist Party once again creates an opening for East European elites to gain limited autonomy from Moscow. Instability and ambiguity were also accompanied by worsening economic conditions, a war in Afghanistan, and increasing military pressure from the West. All of these events “created a standstill and a phase of uncertainty among the CMEA authorities.”⁷⁸ By the time Gorbachev was selected as

⁷⁸ Zwass, *The Council for Mutual Economic Assistance: The Thorny Path from Political to Economic Integration* 119.

head of state, the Solidarity movement in Poland had become the focal point for challenging Soviet rule throughout the Eastern Bloc.

4.5.1 Failed Institutions

Ironically, there was a strong desire from Eastern Europe to maintain some form of regional economic cooperation and continued interest in reforming the CMEA. Unfortunately, reform along the lines needed to maintain the integrity of the bloc proved impossible. The Soviet Union was unwilling to provide the leadership necessary to liberalize the economic infrastructure.⁷⁹ Further, the decision rule of CMEA—equality of all the members and required unanimity on decisions—prevented any significant attempts at reforming the organization. Any changes to economic or monetary policy had to be accepted by all member countries. This type of decision rule tends to lead to least common denominator solutions often with only cosmetic changes.⁸⁰ This meant that unless the Soviet Union coercively forced an agreement, there was little chance that any country, especially Romania, would agree to the creation of a supranational organization with authority over them. This was a significant road block to reforming an institution that was supposedly empowered to make decisions and determine imperial policy. In contrast, the European Union

⁷⁹ Metcalf, *The Council for Mutual Economic Assistance: The Failure of Reform*.

⁸⁰ Ibid.

functions as a supranational organization with representatives from the respective regions empowered with the ability to set and enforce economic policy.

During the reforms instituted by Gorbachev, "different paths to socialism" were once again allowed to proceed. Consequently, the links between national communist parties declined. Moscow recognized that another institution was needed to serve as a mechanism for Soviet control. "Such developments cannot help but undercut the effectiveness and reliability of cooperation between [Warsaw Pact] members through a communication network based on the ruling Communist parties. The [Warsaw Pact] clearly needs much more politically neutral structures for the dialogue between its members."⁸¹ Institutionally, the Warsaw Pact was better suited to functioning as a centralized bureaucracy, but there was a complete lack of political integration. Soviet personnel dominated the upper echelons of the command structure and peripheral elites did not take part in much of the decision-making.

Within the Communist Party of the Soviet Union decisions on foreign policy, particularly concerning relations with Eastern Europe, were divided among several agencies resulting in a lack of unity and direction. "Until the 1988 reorganization of the foreign-policy hierarchy, the role of the Soviet Ministry of Foreign Affairs, headed by Politburo member Eduard Shevardnadze, was to facilitate rather than to

⁸¹ Quoted by Dawisha in Dawisha, *Eastern Europe, Gorbachev, and Reform: The Great Challenge* 108.

decide.”⁸² Instead, most policy decisions were reserved for the Politburo and implemented by the Secretariat.

4.5.2 Continued Coercion

Karen Dawisha concludes in her analysis of Soviet-East relationships that “the Soviet use of indigenous military establishments as levers of control survived most, although not all, of the difficult tests to which it was subjected.”⁸³ Citing Polish General Jaruzelski, she points out that as the strategy of integration had ensured a loyalty to the Soviet Union even during the 1980 popular uprisings. The Polish military, like Kadar in Hungary, successfully balanced its allegiance to the Soviet Union with popular national support. Part of the reason it could maintain its popular support, while still being loyal to the Soviet Union was because the military in Poland was traditionally perceived as an organic part of the nation that protected its citizens against external foes. “The most institutionalized informal control system involved the direct Soviet penetration of those governmental institutions which were particularly important as instruments of power: usually the secret police and the armed forces. The purpose was essentially two-fold: to ensure their absolute loyalty

⁸² Gati, *Hungary and the Soviet Bloc* 81.

⁸³ Dawisha, *Eastern Europe, Gorbachev, and Reform: The Great Challenge* 107.

to the USSR and to prevent their control by some local leaders who might then be tempted to oppose the Soviet Union.”⁸⁴

Moscow continued to successfully keep the Eastern Bloc in line through the use of occupying armies as well as the Sovietization of the government and national armies. “In the Polish ministry itself, of the twenty departments, eight were headed by Soviet officers directly, three had Soviet ‘advisors,’ and of the eleven identified as Poles or Polish Jews at least four were former employees of the NKVD and one a former officer in the Soviet armed forces.”⁸⁵ Significant to this chapter is the fact that this reliance on the use of force only created temporary instances of control and more importantly resulted in weakened ties between the socialist countries and the Soviet Union. The continued use of force de-legitimized the Soviet Union’s defining role as the leader of the socialist internationalism.⁸⁶ Quite simply, the countries of Eastern Europe increasingly rejected Soviet rule because the elites and the population no longer saw any benefits or reason to remain tied to their big brother.

⁸⁴ Brzezinski, *The Soviet Bloc, Unity and Conflict* 120.

⁸⁵ Ibid. 121.

⁸⁶ Brzezinski, “East West Reactions and Eastern Europe (an American-Soviet Dialogue).”; Pearson, *The Rise and Fall of the Soviet Empire*.

4.5.3 Gorbachev's Reforms

The story of Soviet-East European military relations under Gorbachev is essentially one of desperation. In order to reduce the Soviet Union's economic obligations, Gorbachev needed to change political arrangements and build new security frameworks. His initial approach probably saw the Warsaw Pact in terms similar to the other pillar underpinning Moscow's presence in Europe: the CMEA. "Superficially, both organizations suffered from similar problems in that both claimed to represent a unity of purpose which in reality was not there."⁸⁷ For more than forty years the WTO was simply a tool of the Soviet Union that never truly considered the security interests of the member states. "A revitalization of the Warsaw Pact needed more than just improved mechanisms for cooperation; it needed a fundamentally new foundation."⁸⁸ Further, the East Europeans did not have sufficient reason to participate in the WTO because they had very little influence on the direction and policy of the organization. As disenfranchised elites, they naturally turned to other means for achieving their security and political interests.

Incredibly, Soviet leaders recognized the divergence of interests between the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe, but were not prepared to admit this fundamental dysfunction of the organization. Their solution to the problem was to enforce

⁸⁷ Jonathan Eyal, "Military Relations" in Pravda and Royal Institute of International Affairs, *The End of the Outer Empire: Soviet-East European Relations in Transition, 1985-1990* 36.

⁸⁸ Jonathan Eyal, "Military Relations" in *Ibid.* 37.

allegiance through force, or tactical short-term concessions.⁸⁹ Gorbachev also did not fully understand that “the postwar communist political order imposed on the region by Stalin and sustained by his successors lacked legitimacy and was therefore inherently unstable and potentially explosive.”⁹⁰ If Gorbachev intended to retain control or even influence over Eastern Europe, he needed to transform the two primary organizations charged with regulating Soviet-East relationships. He also needed to be willing to use a minimal level of coercion to implement some of the changes. Opposition from the Stalinist regimes of East Germany and Romania could only be successful countered by using coercive levers in conjunction with institutional reforms and economic subsidies. The task facing Gorbachev definitely appeared insurmountable and in order to retain domestic support he would have concede control of Eastern Europe.

4.5.4 Summary

Institutional weaknesses and a lack of transnational integration continued all the way to the end. “Throughout the Gorbachev era, as before, most of the political business transacted between the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe has been through *bilateral* ties, including party-to-party and government-to-government relations as well as numerous semi-governmental and semi-official contacts.” In fact there were

⁸⁹ Jonathan Eyal, “Military Relations” in *Ibid.*

⁹⁰ Gati, *Hungary and the Soviet Bloc* 66.

few policy directives that originated in either of the two principle institutions and most agreements were settled before any meeting of the CMEA or the WTO.

This lack of institutional or transnational ties left few mechanisms for resolving the ongoing economic crisis. Even though defense was claiming a staggeringly large proportion of Soviet resources, the more important reason the Soviet Union experienced a dramatic relative decline stemmed from the rapidly escalating economic burden of Eastern Europe.⁹¹ Instead of the empire contributing to the economic growth of the Soviet Union, Solidarity movements in Poland and poor quality production in the rest of Eastern Europe resulted in the Soviet Union effectively subsidizing the periphery. "The goods that their allies shipped to the Soviets were of much lower quality than the Soviets could have obtained on the open world market in exchange for the energy and raw materials they sent to Eastern Europe."⁹² In many ways these were the results of a command economy; yet, reforming the economy was stymied by the requirement to coerce other governments into agreeing with Gorbachev's plan. Just like other empires in the 20th century, in the end, the Soviet Union simply found it easier and less costly to withdraw.

⁹¹ Brooks and Wohlforth, "Power, Globalization, and the End of the Cold War: Reevaluating a Landmark Case for Ideas."

⁹² Ibid.: 23.

4.6 Conclusion

Reviewing all the periods of Soviet control over Eastern Europe, there does not appear to be one instance where the Soviet Union was able to successfully use all of the strategies of control to achieve a more persistent empire. This contrasts with the Soviet Union's experience with its own republics. While the possibility existed for the Soviet Union to persist in its control of most of the Soviet republics, there was no indication that this would have been the case with Eastern Europe. In fact, once Soviet troops were withdrawn, Eastern Europe quickly realigned itself with the Western Europe, the European Union, and NATO as opposed to maintaining close relationships with the Soviet Union. Since the collapse of the Soviet Union most of the former Bloc countries have now joined or are in the process of joining not only the European Union but NATO as well. In contrast, most of the former Soviet republics are still aligned, at least nominally, with the Russian Federation through the Commonwealth of Independent States.

In the beginning, Stalin's coercive style and the minimal levels of transnational integration realized by a common socialist ideology create sufficient control for the empire to flourish. Stalin's inability to relinquish power and create institutional patterns of control, however, adversely affects the future persistence of the empire. Challenges to imperial control first appear during the populist uprisings in Hungary and Poland following Stalin's death and really never fully disappear. The Prague Spring of 1968 and the Solidarity movements in the 1980s represent

additional spikes in the ongoing challenge to Soviet domination. Reasons for continued resistance to Soviet rule include a lack of centralized institutions, stagnating or declining transnational integration, and ambiguities of control from Moscow whenever there was a leadership change.

Not surprisingly the lack of transnational integration and strong, centralized institutions meant that the Soviet Union had to rely on force to maintain control of the periphery as the response to populist uprisings in Poland and Hungary in 1956, Czechoslovakia in 1968, and Poland in 1980 demonstrated. Even if protection of international socialism was the justification, the means were clearly coercive and the results definitely imperial. The Soviet Union does not appear to be making a transition from empire to a federation or even an alliance. Not until Gorbachev, is the periphery allowed to choose whether it wants to remain a part of the Soviet Union. The lack of institutional control and transnational integration resulted in East Europeans quickly moving to align with the West and away from the Soviet Union when coercive control is lifted.

Institutionally, the Soviet Union failed to create any centralized bureaucracies that could provide direction, stability, and ultimately predictability for the Soviet bloc. For example, the Council for Mutual Economic Assistance was unable to set policy for the socialist economic community because all of its decision had to be agreed upon by the governments of the member states. Further, the organization was never able to overcome the differences between national and international interests so

that East European states could more readily identify as part of the empire.⁹³ Deep divisions over economic policy could not be resolved in a regulated, bureaucratic process such as occurs in much of the world today. The CMEA was never designed, and certainly never became, a supranational organization that could fully regulate or integrate the economic policy of the Soviet Bloc.

The Warsaw Treaty Organization faced similar obstacles in part because it had a Joint Command that was essentially subservient to the Red Army. Reforms eventually granted greater political and decision-making authority to the organization, but member countries, particularly Romania, continued to retain principal control of their indigenous military forces. Further, there was an understanding among Warsaw Pact countries, that unless defense of their nation was at stake, the Warsaw Pact was merely a tool of the Soviet Union in the Cold War against the West.⁹⁴ While the Soviet Union did gain some advantages from joint training exercises and exchange programs, there was very little participation by elites and senior military leaders from Eastern Europe in the decision of the organization. Neil Fodor's analysis concludes that the WTO was not an efficient military mechanism and politically did not formally coordinate foreign policy or even diplomacy. Instead, the function of the WTO was to foster ideological unity and reinforce the political basis for the socialist

⁹³ Zwass, *The Council for Mutual Economic Assistance: The Thorny Path from Political to Economic Integration* 240.

⁹⁴ Jeffrey Simon, *Cohesion and Dissension in Eastern Europe: Six Crises, Foreign Policy Issues*. (New York, NY: Praeger, 1983).; Neil Fodor, *Warsaw Treaty Organization: A Political and Organizational Analysis* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1990).

community by giving it a formal character.⁹⁵ Significantly, many of the formal structures, such as the Joint Secretariat and the Committee of Ministers of Foreign Affairs, were only operated since 1976. Soviet efforts to retain absolute control resulted in diminished transnational integration and decreased acceptance by the periphery.

On the surface, the institutions established by the Soviet Union had the appearance of an international or supranational organization. In reality, both the WTO and the CMEA were established as mechanisms of Soviet control that lacked the advantages a centralized, supranational institution would have given them. Policy decisions were effectively only recommendations because bureaucratic control did not extend into the periphery. Apart from the support of the party secretaries, there was little these organizations could accomplish. Further, with very little political representation, East Europeans perceived these institutions as simply extensions of Soviet domination. In the view of the majority of the population, the WTO and the CMEA did not form part of an international bureaucracy that could legitimately make or implement any type of policy. That left coercion as the only real means for achieving East European compliance with Soviet interests.

Finally, looking over the entire period of Soviet control, Charles Gati's analysis of East European crises reveals a significant correlation between the lack of unity of Soviet leadership, on the one hand, and East European popular movements

⁹⁵ Fodor, *Warsaw Treaty Organization: A Political and Organizational Analysis* 109-10.

and regime assertiveness, on the other. "Specifically, it has been all but impossible for the Soviet Union to pursue its two competing goals of bloc cohesion and East European stability in a judicious and calibrated fashion at time of unsettled leadership in the Kremlin."⁹⁶ Instability at the top, particularly during leadership changes reverberated throughout the empire resulting in a lack of cohesion and predictability.

Table 4.1 summarizes my findings about the Soviet Union's use of coercion, institutions, and integration in Eastern Europe. There is no period of time where coercion does not play the predominate role in maintaining control. As anticipated by Hypothesis 3, this resulted in an increased likelihood of resistance throughout the entire period of the Soviet Empire. The initial period of time where some transnational integration existed did not last and the effects were quickly ameliorated by the use of force to quell uprisings in Hungary, Poland, and Czechoslovakia. The other aspect of Soviet control that stands out is the absolute weakness of imperial institutions. The few reforms attempted under Khrushchev and Brezhnev did not give the two primary institutions, the Warsaw Pact and the Council for Mutual Economic Assistance sufficient power to create or implement policy. For that reason, policy directives were handed down directly from the Soviet Union and implemented through coercion.

⁹⁶ Gati, *Hungary and the Soviet Bloc* 209.

	Control	Coercion	Institutions	Integration
1945-1956	Moderate	High	Weak	Moderate
1956-1968	Weak	Very High	Weak	Low
1968-1980	Moderate	Moderate	Weak	Low
1980-1989	Weak	Low	Weak	Low

Table 4.1 Strategies for Eastern Europe

Robert Hutchings concludes his analysis of Soviet strategies during the period of 1968 to 1980 with this somber reflection.

Thus the vision of a durable and viable Pax Sovietica remained in 1980 as elusive as ever. For all its external assertiveness, the Soviet-led alliance system in Eastern Europe was still beset by the internal contradictions and fundamental instability of an empire held together by force. It had failed to submerge national aspirations beneath the façade of internationalism, and it had not won popular allegiance by ideological persuasion or political achievement. It had failed to bridge the gap between rulers and ruled or arrest the growing enervation and immobility of its ruling parties. It had not even assured law and order in its half of the continent, for the chief threats to European peace since World War II had arisen in Eastern Europe itself—Hungary 1956, Czechoslovakia in 1968, and Poland after August 1980—in nationalist outbursts aimed directly or indirectly at Soviet hegemony in the region. After thirty-five years, Pax Sovietica remained neither stable, secure, nor peaceful.⁹⁷

He succinctly captures the failure of the Soviet experiment in Eastern Europe. With a predominant reliance on coercion, there was little expectation that the Soviet Union could retain long term influence over Eastern Europe.

⁹⁷ Hutchings, *Soviet-East European Relations: Consolidation and Conflict, 1968-1980* 235.

While the Soviet Union did create some institutions to regulate relationships with Eastern Europe, they did not satisfy the requirement stipulated in Chapter 2 to build order and stability. In order to achieve long term persistence, the central institutions of the empire needed sufficient concentration and scope of power to be able to create and enforce policies. This was particularly true when the Soviet empire was faced with social and economic crises. The absence or weakness of bloc institutions meant that the only effective way the Soviet Union could resolve a crisis was to resort to coercion. There really were no other mechanisms in place. As demonstrated before, continued reliance on coercion builds resentment and over time leads to acts of resistance and rebellion. Rather than creating acceptance and legitimacy for its power the Soviet Union succeeded only in draining its economy by subsidizing Eastern Europe. In addition, the primary institutions of the Soviet Union, namely the Communist Party lacked sufficient coherence or transparency to maintain stability during periods of leadership transition. The collapse of Soviet Union's 'outer' Empire failed because an extremely weak central bureaucracy failed to create sufficient legitimacy or acceptance for Soviet leadership in the Eastern Bloc. Perhaps the most telling evidence that the Soviet Union's coercive strategy failed is the rapid collapse of the Warsaw Pact and the CMEA and the abrupt reorientation of Eastern Europe toward the European Union and NATO.

CHAPTER 5

EMPIRE IN TRANSITION: THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION

5.1 Introduction

In this chapter I extend my analysis of empire to the Russian Federation. In Chapter 2, I suggested that collapse is not the only outcome for an empire. Theoretically and empirically empires can also transition to some type of multinational or federal type of state structure. This chapter addresses that possibility. I argue that the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991 marked the end of one empire and the start of a transition for another. Given its continuing center-periphery relationships with the former Soviet republics and the new federal subjects of the federation, the Russian Federation exhibits many of the characteristics of an empire and consequently faces many of the same challenges. This is not an attempt to categorically determine or even debate whether Russia is or is reverting back to an empire—that would yield little more than a title. Rather, I will use the theory of imperial persistence presented in this dissertation to examine the ability of the

Russian Federation to persist in maintaining control of its peripheral, federal regions especially those with aspirations of independence.

In 1991, the newly sovereign Russian Soviet Federated Socialist Republic, later renamed the Russian Federation, inherited many of the attributes of the former Soviet Union. Comprising approximately three-fourths of the territory of the former Soviet Union, and containing more than 160 different national and ethnic groups, the newly formed federation was immediately challenged by groups who desired greater autonomy and even independence. Just prior to the collapse of the Soviet Union, Boris Yeltsin actually encouraged and challenged the autonomous regions of the Russian Republic to “take as much independence as you can hold on to” in the hopes of undermining Gorbachev’s political power. Yeltsin did succeed in unseating Gorbachev, but he also eroded the integrity of the Russian Republic. By encouraging independence, he exacerbated the difficulties of controlling such a diverse and sprawling federation and his words would come to haunt him during the next decade.

Unlike the fifteen republics of the former Soviet Union, few today argue that the ethno-nationalist regions of the Russian Federation (including Chechnya) should be granted independence. Still suffering the consequences of other imperial breakups, the international community is not particularly interested in recognizing and dealing with additional claims of sovereignty. Even Taiwan, which has effectively functioned independently from mainland China for half a century has not been accorded the same rights and recognition that others—even failing states such as

Somalia—have received. The Russian Federation is today recognized as a legitimate, sovereign country with the right to control the territories and regions contained within it.

While there is some fear that Russia will attempt to resurrect its empire, especially with regard to the Commonwealth of Independent States, the primary concern in the literature is whether democracy and the protection of individual freedoms will take root within Russian society.¹ Most recently under Putin, democratic principles such as freedom of the press have become more restricted and elections no longer appear to be free or competitive. The federal regions are experiencing a similar erosion of their rights and autonomy complaining that the central government is interfering with local legislation. The question most scholars are asking is whether Russia will continue to develop democracy or revert instead to the autocratic styles of government characteristic of Tsarist Russia or the Soviet Union. For Russian leaders, however, the real question is how to maintain control of a diverse population that has been separated into ethnically defined regions. Like the Soviet Union, the challenge to the integrity of the Russian Federation lies with the peripheral regions that make up the federation.

¹ Baker and DeFrank, *The Politics of Diplomacy: Revolution, War, and Peace, 1989-1992*.; Peter Baker and Susan Glasser, *Kremlin Rising: Vladimir Putin's Russia and the End of Revolution* (New York: Scribner, 2005).; Andrew Jack, *Inside Putin's Russia* (London: Granta, 2004).; William E. Odom, Robert Dujarric, and Hudson Institute., *Commonwealth or Empire? Russia, Central Asia and the Transcaucasus* (Indianapolis, IN: Hudson Institute, 1995).; Cameron Ross, "Federalism and Electoral Authoritarianism under Putin," *Demokratizatsiya* 13, no. 3 (2005).; Gordon M. Hahn, "Putin's Federal Reforms: Reintegrating Russia's Legal Space or Upsetting the Metastability of Russia's Asymmetrical Federalism," in *Demokratizatsiya* (2001).; James Alexander, "Federal Reforms in Russia: Putin's Challenge to the Republics," in *Demokratizatsiya* (Heldref Publications, 2004).

In this chapter I will first discuss Russia's transition from empire to federation. While all empires eventually end, how long they last and whether they collapse or transition to a multinational state or federation depends on how imperial control is maintained. I argue that the most persistent empires are those that have successfully integrated their peripheries and initiated a transition to some type of federal or multinational state. Where Russia fits in that description of empire is discussed in the following section. The remainder of this chapter examines Russia's imperial transition under first Boris Yeltsin and then Vladimir Putin.

The first period begins in 1991 with Boris Yeltsin's radical challenges to Mikhail Gorbachev and the legitimacy of the Soviet Union. The collapse of the Soviet Union later that year initiated a "Parade of Sovereignities" by the Soviet republics and many of the autonomous regions of the Russian Republic that then threatened the viability of the new Russian Federation. This chaotic period ends in 1993 with the adoption of a new constitution that begins to restore power to the central government generally, and the executive branch in particular. The period continues with Yeltsin's attempts to regain political control of the increasingly autonomous regions and newly formed Russian republics. Despite the existence of a new constitution, Yeltsin relied extensively on bi-lateral agreements to broker limited allegiance from the periphery. He succeeded in creating a highly asymmetric federation that was based primarily on special economic considerations for the more wealthy federal subjects. He was also faced with the need to use coercive force to reestablish control of Chechnya. This first period is best characterized by the tenuous

hold the central government retains on the periphery. The Yeltsin periods end with the appointment of Vladimir Putin as Prime Minister and eventually presidential successor. The next period recounts Putin's ongoing efforts to build a stronger central government and reestablish more centralized control of the federation. While criticized for undermining the democratization of Russia, Putin has been rather successful in creating a stronger union between the federal subjects and has even managed to gain limited allegiance from the Chechen region.

5.2 Empire and Federation

Prior to the collapse of the Soviet Union, there were significant overlaps between the Russian and Soviet governments. Both governments occupied the same capital, shared the same bureaucratic and Party structures, and the Russian Federated Socialist Soviet Republic constituted the overwhelming majority of Soviet territory. Even though Russia "separated" from the Soviet Union along with the other fourteen republics, in reality the newly formed Russian Federation inherited much of what used to be called the Soviet Union. The bureaucratic institutions, the federal structure, and the ethnic or national diversity that characterized the Soviet Union are very much a part of Russia today. More significantly, the Russian Federation has continued to exert strong influence, often bordering on outright control, over many of the former republics especially in Central Asia and the Caucasus. In short, the

Russian Federation is a strong candidate to test the logic of imperial persistence for empires in transition.

Much like the former Russian Federated Socialist Soviet Republic, the newly formed Russian Federation is predominantly ethnic Russian. According to the 2002 census (the first census conducted since the fall of the Soviet Union) 79.83 percent of the population (115,889,107 people) is ethnically Russian. Groups larger than one million people include the Tatars, 3.83 percent (5,554,601); Ukrainians, 2.03 percent (2,942,961); Bashkirs, 1.15 percent (1,673,389); Chuvashs, 1.13 percent (1,637,094); Chechens, .94 percent (1,360,253); and Armenians, .78 percent (1,130,491). The Federation is organized into 89 constituent units including 21 republics, 2 federal cities, 55 oblasts or krais, 10 autonomous okrugs and 1 autonomous oblast. These federal units are organized both ethnically and territorially with a complex distribution of powers and poorly defined jurisdiction.² The result is a very assymetric federal structure in which some units (such as the federal cities and the republics) wield far more clout than other regions.

The 21 republics are perhaps the most significant units within the federation and have often been the subject of Moscow's attempt to reform the federation. The republics provide territorial homes to some of Russia's most significant ethnic groups; yet, not all of the minorities have their own republic and not all members of a group that has a republic live on its territory. In fact, in most of the republics, the

² Peter Reddaway and Robert W. Orttung, *The Dynamics of Russian Politics: Putin's Reform of Federal-Regional Relations* (Lanham, Md.: Rowman & Littlefield, 2004).

titular ethnic group does not even make up a majority of the population.³ Nevertheless, it is the republics which have been the most vocal in their pursuit of greater autonomy and in some cases outright independence. For that reason, Moscow has been particularly interested in reigning in the more independent minded republics even though some of the other regions have been equally guilty, just more quiet, in pursuing autonomy from Moscow. The continuing division of power in Russia along these ethnic lines is a legacy of the Soviet Union and forms the baseline for identities of “us” versus “them” in federal relationships.

The legacy of the Soviet Union is a state rife with ethnic conflict and a lack of consistent government. During the collapse of the Soviet Union, many of the former party apparatchiks simply put on nationalist clothes and rode the wave of nationalism back into political office.⁴ In many regions, little has changed from the Soviet era—regional governors continue their patronage systems and corrupt government is simply an accepted reality of Russian politics. Even Yeltsin’s determination to gain greater autonomy for Russia was in fact a political ploy to directly challenge Gorbachev’s claim to leadership. In this sense, Daniel Kempton believes “the battle between the Soviet and Russian governments was not so much a center-periphery

³ Robert W. Orttung, Danielle N. Lussier, and Anna Paretskaya, *The Republics and Regions of the Russian Federation: A Guide to Politics, Policies, and Leaders* (Armonk, N.Y.: M.E. Sharpe, 2000).

⁴ Beissinger, *Nationalist Mobilization and the Collapse of the Soviet State*.

struggle, but a struggle between two contenders for the center.”⁵ Yeltsin was primarily interested in gaining control of the heart of the empire—Russia. To do so, he had to undermine Gorbachev’s authority and legitimacy and consequently the legitimacy of the Soviet Union as well.

For Russia, the transition to a federal republic is complicated by the fact that the Soviet Union collapsed from a weakened central bureaucracy. If Russia was going to successfully stay together as a federation, then Moscow would have to regain the ability to make life orderly and predictable throughout the federation. This meant that the authority of the central government would have to be reestablished with regard to the peripheral regions. Specifically, claims of sovereignty within the republics could not take precedence over the federal government.

In order to analyze Russia’s ongoing transition, this section reviews the differences between empire and federation and the how it may be possible to transition from one to the other. The discussion in Chapter 2 found that empire is a hierarchical system in which a metropolitan society imposes its will on a peripheral society. Sovereignty over the periphery’s external politics and to some extent its internal politics is retained almost exclusively by the metropole. Further, rule of the periphery is often perceived as inequitable because the metropole enjoys certain advantages or benefits in comparison to the periphery. Any power or sovereignty that

⁵ Daniel R. Kempton, “Three Challenges to Assessing Russian Federalism” in Daniel R. Kempton and Terry D. Clark, *Unity or Separation: Center-Periphery Relations in the Former Soviet Union* (Westport, Conn.: Praeger, 2002) 32.

the periphery enjoys is usually delegated by the metropole and there are few, if any, exclusive powers reserved for the periphery.

Federations on the other hand, represent a voluntary or consensual association between sovereign states. This association is typically codified in a binding constitution that ultimately governs the relationship between the center and the periphery. The peripheral states concede certain rights to the federal government for the purpose of regulating the relationship between the federal subjects. Significantly, there is agreement between the center and the periphery on the division of power and types of sovereignty. In his discussion of federal theory, Daniel Kempton describes the relationship this way:

Consensus means that neither the federal government nor the component governments can dictate terms to the other. Instead, the federal government is required to build consensus among the component governments, particularly for policies that affect the components.... Federal states are states in which the federal government cannot unilaterally implement a significant change in the powers, rights or borders of the federal components. One might say that the components hold a collective veto over the federal government on these issues.⁶

This description highlights a key distinction between empire and federation—federations represent a power sharing agreement that is not necessarily more equitable, but certainly more acceptable to the periphery. Even though the central government is set apart from the rest of the federation hierarchically, its power is

⁶ Daniel R. Kempton, "Three Challenges to Assessing Russian Federalism" in *Ibid.* 21.

regulated by a formal agreement with the periphery that the center cannot easily change.

In both empires and federation there is a central government, peripheral subjects, and a clear hierarchy between the two. Empires, however, require a much stronger centralized power primarily because the relationship between the metropole and periphery is often established in opposition to the will of the periphery. In empires, sovereignty is retained by the center with some powers delegated to the periphery. Federations are a far more complex political system of shared sovereignty in which both the center and periphery have shared and exclusive powers. Federations generally represent an acknowledgement by the periphery that relinquishing some of its sovereignty to a central, federal government is in its best interests. While federations can be formed out of alliances between sovereign political societies, they can also develop through the devolution of power and sovereignty. The United States, Canada, and Switzerland are examples of the former, and Germany, India, and Belgium are examples of the later.

The Russian Federation is also an example of a devolution of power with the rights and powers of the center and periphery still not clearly codified. Russia has not yet achieved consensus with all of its constituent parts on the relationship between the federal center and the peripheral regions. Some of these disagreements that are

undermining the transition to federalism stem from “problems of transparency, inclusion, and ratification on the federal-republican and inter-republican levels”.⁷

The key for long term persistence—to transition from empire to federation—is to create the conditions by which the periphery accepts and eventually desires the institutional hierarchy of empire and then federation. The goal then of an empire in transition is to increase the level of consensual support for the federation. As theorized earlier, acceptance and then consensus develop as the periphery gains a more active role in the politics of the empire/federation. A key aspect in that transition is the codification of the division powers. More importantly, the division of power cannot be unilaterally amended by either the center or the periphery. “The inability of either side to alter the division of power unilaterally is what separates a federal system from a centralized unitary system. Both systems may grant considerable power to the component governments, but only federal systems give their components the legal means to protect their powers.”⁸ The 1993 Constitution pushed through by Yeltsin more clearly established the division of power between the center and periphery.

Kempton finds that despite criticism, the Constitution is still considered binding by Russia’s federal subjects. He writes, that “Those who oppose the

⁷ Jeffrey Kahn, *Federalism, Democratization, and the Rule of Law in Russia* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002) 146.

⁸ Daniel R. Kempton, “Three Challenges to Assessing Russian Federalism” in Kempton and Clark, *Unity or Separation: Center-Periphery Relations in the Former Soviet Union* 24.

Constitution generally seek to amend or rewrite it; they do not disregard it.”⁹

However, the division is not without ambiguity. Provisions in the constitution allow for bi-lateral negotiations between the center and periphery. In the Russian republic of Komi for example, treaties with Moscow have recognized the region’s right to greater control over its territory and natural resources. While this asymmetric aspect of Russian federalism may restrain or dampen secessionist tendencies, it also tends to work against the centripetal forces created by Yeltsin’s Constitution.¹⁰

Another condition that Kempton identifies as necessary for federal systems to succeed is the presence of a federal political culture.¹¹ A federal political culture is Kempton’s way of describing acceptance of the hierarchical structure of the federation. The periphery must recognize and accept that a strong central government is necessary for its viability and growth. In the transition from empire to federation this political culture is the result of institutional stability and the participation of the periphery in imperial politics. James Alexander’s study of the Komi republic recounts some of the reasons a federal political culture has yet to emerge in Russia and why there is limited support for federalism. “The development of a political culture supportive of Russian federalism has been further hindered by the slow, seemingly retrograde, development of civil society and political parties in the Komi

⁹ Daniel R. Kempton, “Three Challenges to Assessing Russian Federalism” in *Ibid.* 39.

¹⁰ James Alexander, “Komi and the Center: Developing Federalism in an Era of Socioeconomic Crisis” in *Ibid.* 50.

¹¹ Daniel R. Kempton, “Three Challenges to Assessing Russian Federalism” in *Ibid.* 24.

Republic. Rather than helping to develop political loyalty across levels of government, the weakness of Russia's political parties and civil society give certain centrifugal forces the upper hand."¹² Without national parties that can unify the political space of the federation, regional affiliations have developed that are only concerned with politics of the region. Added to this, elections are held irregularly and rarely in conjunction with federal elections for the presidency or the State Duma. As result, there is little opportunity for cross regional cooperation between parties to support candidates. In other words, there is a need for increased transnational integration through national political parties and social programs if the Federation is to persist rather than disintegrate into regional factions. Armed with this understanding of federation and empire, this chapter now examines Russia's transition.

5.3 1989 – 1999: *Tenuous Control*

In the modern era, the most significant challenge to the persistence of empire emanates from the periphery. The principles of self-determination and nationalism present challenges to the continued rule of a metropolitan state over a peripheral society. Like its predecessor, the Russian Federation continues to face separatist

¹² James Alexander, "Komi and the Center: Developing Federalism in an Era of Socioeconomic Crisis" in *Ibid.* 57.

challenges from nationalist groups primarily from those regions with non-Russian ethnic majorities. The challenges have resulted in brutal military actions against Chechnya and less violent, but no less dramatic confrontations with Tatarstan. In addition, Stephen Kahn finds that the selective compliance with federal agreements is a "significant threat to the stability and integrity of the Russian Federation."¹³ Based on his definition of empire, Russia today is not too far removed from the federal façade maintained by the Soviet Union. And like the Soviet Union, the Russian Federation faces challenges from the periphery that threatened its ability to persist in controlling the periphery.

Cameron Ross, however, believes that fears of Russia falling apart as a result of ethnic disintegration have been exaggerated.¹⁴ He argues that viable demands for secession can only come from those regions located on the territorial periphery of the federation with an indigenous ethnic group that forms the majority of the population. Only six republics, Chechnya, Dagestan, Ingushetiya, Kalmykiya, North Osetiya-Alaniya, and Tuva, satisfy this criteria and all of them are totally dependent on the federal budget for economic survival. As evidence of this seemingly insurmountable hurdle, he points to Chechnya as the only region to attempt to gain independence from the Federation. And Chechnya's experience through two bloody wars and

¹³ Kahn, *Federalism, Democratization, and the Rule of Law in Russia* 284.

¹⁴ Ross, "Federalism and Electoral Authoritarianism under Putin."

occupation by Russian troops serves as another important factor that will dampen separatist's demands in other republics.¹⁵

While Ross may be correct in arguing that independence is unlikely in the near term, Moscow has nevertheless lost considerable control over the republics and many of the other federal subjects. The federal government continues to face resistance from the periphery over taxation, control of natural resources, and issues of divided sovereignty. Federal authorities have documented thousands of violations of the Russian Constitution in various regional constitutions and laws. Summarizing the results of reputable surveys, Kahn writes that "Interviews in Tatarstan in 1997 and 1998 found that republican elites were unsatiated by their acquired privileges." He goes on to say that a bilateral treaty that Yeltsin signed with Tatarstan was "viewed as one step in a perpetual process of acquiring more sovereignty."¹⁶ The desired end state does not appear to be a more unified federation, but a much looser, confederal arrangement in which the republics retain considerable autonomy, almost independence from the center. This is reflected in the continued resistance to conform to federal laws or even the Russian Constitution. Kahn finds that there is no example of a confederal state with fewer powers than what the republic elites advocate for the Russian Federation.¹⁷

¹⁵ Ibid. 354.

¹⁶ Kahn, *Federalism, Democratization, and the Rule of Law in Russia* 169.

¹⁷ Ibid. 147.

5.3.1 Weak Centralized Institutions

The weakness of the central government was glaring demonstrated by the on-going conflict between the executive and legislative branches. Richard Sakwa's study of the Russian Federation concludes that while "Russia may have inherited the bulk of the territory and resources, the political institutions bequeathed by the old system were fragile and disordered."¹⁸ Since its formation, the Duma and Yeltsin were in conflict over who was charged with leading the country. As the previous chapters showed, struggles for power during leadership changes at the metropole resulted in unpredictability and instability for the peripheral regions. Similarly, the dissolution of the Communist Party was accompanied by a crisis of governance between the newly formed parliament and the new president that threatened to devolve to chaos and social disorder within the Russian Federation. The conflict stemmed from the fact that Russia was governed by a constitution written in 1978 and heavily amended in 1990 that granted supreme state power to both the executive and the legislative branches. Richard Sakwa finds that the "distinctive feature of the crisis was that, while policy initiative lay with the presidential side, control over implementation and administration lay with parliament."¹⁹ In effect, Russia was governed by two competing bodies pursuing two different principles of government with equal vigor. A showdown within the central government was almost inevitable.

¹⁸ Richard Sakwa, *Russian Politics and Society*, 3rd ed. (London; New York: Routledge, 2002) 40.

¹⁹ Ibid. 48.

James Alexander believes this struggle between Yeltsin and the Supreme Soviet "led to ineffective national policy-making and only fueled the strength of centrifugal forces during 1992 and 1993 as the regions entered the policy vacuum left by central authority."²⁰ This assessment is eerily reminiscent of the Soviet era when leadership struggles at the Kremlin resulted in the republics and Eastern Bloc countries distancing their governments from the Communist Party. In the Russian Federation, peripheral elites faced with instability at the top also turned inward and looked to their own resources in an attempt to solve the complex social and economic problems of their regions. This was also an opportunity for peripheral governments to increase their autonomy and grab as much "sovereignty as they could swallow."

While the Congress was strengthened significantly dating back to Gorbachev, the institutional reforms were incomplete and the parliament was incapable of working like a normal representative body. The heavily amended constitution granted tremendous powers to the Congress but provided no institutional way to fulfill this role. Similarly, the president's powers were temporary and subject to constant review by the parliament. Both branches recognized the need for a new constitution, but the process was stymied by political aspirations and grabs for power by both the parliament and the executive.

²⁰ Alexander, "Federal Reforms in Russia: Putin's Challenge to the Republics," 236.

5.3.2 Transnational Integration?

Boris Yeltsin came to power on wave of new found Russian nationalism. In fact, a surprising aspect of the collapse of the Soviet Union was the extent to which Russian nationalism undermined the union. A nationalist mobilization within RSFSR led by Yeltsin also encouraged nationalist independence movements in the other Soviet republics. Several scholars assert that Yeltsin believed he could put an end to the Gorbachev era by dissolving the Soviet Union and then become the president of a new union—the Commonwealth of Independent States.²¹ Not anticipated by Yeltsin was the fact that he would inherit the federal structure of the Soviet Union and his newly formed central government was essentially the same Soviet government that had lost the ability to control its autonomous regions. As Russia declared its independence from the Soviet Union, many of its autonomous regions also jumped on the sovereignty bandwagon and announced that their regional laws were now superior to the federal government and claimed jurisdiction over taxation.

As consequence of these widespread ethno-nationalist movements, the Russian Federation more closely resembled a loose confederation when Yeltsin becomes its first president in 1991. What is surprising therefore was the extent to which most of the regions still wished to remain a part of the Russian Federation. There were demands for increased autonomy, but outright independence was only declared by Chechnya. Even this claim for independent sovereignty was a primarily a political

²¹ Sakwa, *Russian Politics and Society* 37.

move by General Dzhokhar Dudaev to secure his position as the recently elected president of the republic.²²

There are indicators that show a considerable amount of transnational integration existed in Russia even while regions were claiming greater autonomy. Jeffery Kahn reports that shortly after the forming of the Russian Federation, surveys showed that most people considered themselves representatives of both their republic and Russia.²³ In other words, with few exceptions, Russians and titular ethnic groups identified equally with the federation and their particular republic. Unfortunately, the chaos of those initial years followed by the signing of bi-lateral treaties with many of the republics has potentially weakened this common identity. A later survey that used similar questions leads Kahn to believe that "identification with a larger federal polity was at least in danger of weakening."²⁴ Thus far, the periphery has not fully accepted the idea that the federation will somehow be greater than simply an association of independent republics.

Regional separation especially with deep cultural or ethnic difference is a significant obstacle for continued imperial control. As the periphery develops socially and economically, there is a high probability that challenges will increase and

²² Russia's rejection of the Chechen presidential election in October 1991 led Dudaev to declare independence from the RSFSR. In effect he was challenging Yeltsin to try to prevent him from setting up his own government. Dunlop, *Russia Confronts Chechnya: Roots of a Separatist Conflict*. Chapter 3.

²³ Kahn, *Federalism, Democratization, and the Rule of Law in Russia*.

²⁴ Ibid. 170.

demands for independence will become more frequent. Further, claims of independence are more readily accepted as legitimate, even by the international community, when there are clear distinctions between the center and periphery—an “us” versus “them”. For example, prior to the collapse of the Soviet Union, few in the international community recognized the right of the republics to secede from the Union. Once it became clear that the Soviet center had collapsed, all of the republics were promptly recognized as independent, sovereign states.

5.3.3 Reasserting Control

The struggle in the center was finally resolved in true Russian fashion—a revolution. In September 1993 Yeltsin frustrated by the lack of progress toward a new constitution dissolves the Supreme Soviet. That act is promptly followed by an insurrection with armed insurgents from the White House seizing the Mayor’s office and then taking over the Ostankino television center. Yeltsin eventually calls in the military which surrounds the White House forcing the rebellious leaders of the parliament to surrender. By defeating his opponents during the standoff, Yeltsin is able to push through a new constitution that begins to restore the power of the central government. Unfortunately, while questions of authority and the delineation of power are finally established in a strong presidential system, the relationship between the center and the periphery continued to be ill-defined. Indeed, Yeltsin even reiterated his challenge to the republics in May 1994 to take as much independence as

they could swallow. This was promptly followed by the invasion of Chechnya later that year to take back some of that sovereignty. This deep confusion over the shared sovereignties of the federation resulted in a federation with fewer powers than are found in most *confederations*.

Continued regional resistance diminished the centripetal power of the new constitution and Yeltsin was forced to establish bi-lateral treaties to gain allegiance especially from the twenty one ethnic republics. This collection of treaties created a pronounced asymmetrical federation and lead to confusion over what should be considered the supreme law of the land. Often, the Russian Constitution and the bi-lateral treaties were in direct conflict over divisions of authority between the center and the periphery. Initially, this asymmetry functioned as a strategy to hold together the federation by allowing peripheral elites greater participation in the decision-making process. This type of asymmetry is not unusual in multi-national federations such as India, Spain, and Belgium. In fact, James Alexander finds that Russia's constitutional recognition of the twenty-one republics as "special" entities was a natural strategy for retaining the territorial integrity of a state threatened by centrifugal forces.²⁵ Difficulties arise when the asymmetries remain secretive, ad hoc, and outside the constitutional framework of the federation. According to Jeffery Kahn secretive, bi-lateral executive driven negotiations are "eroding conceptions of a

²⁵ Alexander, "Federal Reforms in Russia: Putin's Challenge to the Republics," 238.

federal civic identity, a unified legal space, and fiscal burden-sharing.”²⁶ So while the bi-lateral treaties may have arrested some of the centrifugal forces pulling the federation apart, if continued under current practices they may contribute to the long term breakdown of the federation.

Kahn writes that at the height of the ‘tax wars’, the republics routinely withheld tax payments to the federal government claiming that those federal programs benefiting the republic would be financed directly by the republic itself. “Selective federal payments, which is what such a scheme amounted to, were the fiscal equivalent of the selective implementation of federal laws.” By failing to contribute to the general infrastructure and defense of the whole Federation the republics were only considering the well-being of their individual republics and not the whole Federation.²⁷ Again, the parts did not believe that a federation would somehow being greater than simply the sum of the parts.

A study commissioned by the Office of the Secretary of Defense and conducted by the Hudson Institute concluded that by late 1994, Central Asia and the Transcaucasus “were coming under a new Russian hegemony, if not yet imperial control.”²⁸ The authors, William Odom and Robert Dujarric attribute this reestablishment of control to the ability of Russia alone to provide military forces

²⁶ Kahn, *Federalism, Democratization, and the Rule of Law in Russia* 188.

²⁷ Ibid. 186.

²⁸ Odom, Dujarric, and Hudson Institute., *Commonwealth or Empire? Russia, Central Asia and the Transcaucasus*.

desperately needed to create order in a region rife with conflict and instability. Using the nascent institutions of the Commonwealth of Independent States, Russia started to establish collective security arrangements and build bilateral networks with its former republics. A significant aspect of these new arrangements was the need for a trained officer corps to provide leadership to indigenous military forces. "Military dependency, especially on Russian officers, was the most important lever Moscow exercised in reasserting control over Central Asia and the Transcaucasus."²⁹ The new republics are still vulnerable to Russian intervention especially because of the shortage of local ethnic officer cadres.

In 1994 Odom and Dujarric surmise that there are three plausible scenarios for the future of Russia. The first is a new Russian imperialism. Given the huge costs associated with sustaining control over the near abroad they believe this would eventually devolve into a scenario where a weakened Russia leaves the region mired in "domestic turmoil", "civil strife" with the possibility of wars over border disputes that could last "several years, perhaps a decade or more." A decade later, the region is still struggling with conflict and domestic turmoil, but there appears to be movement toward strengthening of relationships with the Russian Federation and the CIS. In particular, Putin has taken steps to reassert Moscow's authority and reestablish Russia's leadership in the region.

²⁹ Ibid. 257.

5.3.4 Chechnya

During the initial years of Yeltsin's tenure, the use of coercion was rarely considered. Even though the federal republics were "occupied" by Russian troops, there was little expectation that these forces would be used to fight against republics in their pursuit of greater independence. The perception was abruptly changed when military forces were finally used to regain control of the breakaway republic of Chechnya. Chechnya's experience during what would become two wars was undoubtedly an important factor that "dampened the separatist demands from other republics."³⁰ While Russia's willingness to use force in Chechnya temporarily reestablished control over the region and potentially deterred other regions from seeking independence, centralized institutions and fostering transnational integration will be far more crucial to its ability to retain control for the long term.

A series of political miscalculations on the part of both the central government and Chechnya, eventually lead to military intervention. Emil Pain, the head of the Center for Studies in Extremism and Xenophobia and a consultant to former president Boris Yeltsin during the first war in Chechnya finds that "the effect of the war in Chechnya on the Muslim population of Russia is a complicated phenomenon, because it involves the problem of conflicting loyalties." He goes on to describe how most Chechens were not necessarily religious. Prior to the war many of them had been loyal Soviet citizens. "So, when the war started, a lot of them had to make a choice

³⁰ Ross, "Federalism and Electoral Authoritarianism under Putin," 354.

they did not want to make. The same was true about most of the Muslims living in Russia in general.”³¹ Continued reliance on coercive force has thus far failed to resolve the nationalist demands for greater autonomy.

In 1994 and 1995, at the beginning of the first war in Chechnya, many Chechens who had served in the Soviet army before the conflict referred to the Russian troops in Chechnya as “nashi” (our guys). But, as the war grew more brutal, ethnic and religious identities often prevailed over old friendships. Many people in the neighboring, predominantly Muslim Republic of Dagestan, who sympathized with the plight of their fellow Muslims in Chechnya during the first war, became angry with them after the mass kidnappings and intrusions onto their territory by Chechen terrorists Salman Raduyev and Shamil Basayev, in 1996 and 1999. Although Tatarstan’s president, Mintimer Shaimiyev, had negotiated an exemption from military service in Chechnya for soldiers from his republic in 1994, he joined the chorus of approval when Russian troops entered Chechnya again in 1999 in retaliation for a raid against Dagestan by Basayev following the period of de facto Chechen independence between 1996 and 1999.³²

There are strong historical barriers to achieving greater transnational integration with the Chechens. Stalin was literally obsessed with eliminating the Chechen and Ingush population. For several decades he proceeded to purge and

³¹ Dmitry Babich, *A Clash of Loyalties* (Russia Profile, May 24 2006 [cited May 2006]); available from <http://www.russiaprofile.org/politics/2006/5/24/3756.wbp>.

³² Ibid.

deport massive numbers of Chechens and even eliminated the republic in 1944. The Chechens suffered immensely conservatively losing hundreds of thousands of people through Stalin's genocide.³³ Even though these atrocities were not experienced by the current generations, the memory of the events nevertheless fuel anti-Russian sentiments. This is because like nationalism, anti-Russian sentiments in Chechnya contained aspects of both instrumental rationality and social construction. "In situations where positive identities of 'self' are hard to come by, the ready availability of a powerful, prosperous, culturally omnipresent 'other' can provide a social glue that has broad appeal. Such situations are frequent, for example, in failing states, in societies divided deeply along ethnic, religious, class or other lines, and in polities that are in the process of constructing a new collective identity."³⁴ For Dudaev, anti-Russia views became a potent and useful stand-in for otherwise missing symbols of collective identity in the Chechnya and even the Northern Caucasus region. One way to bolster his position as a leader was to unite and mobilize an ethnically diverse region by identifying a common enemy.³⁵

5.3.5 Summary

³³ Dunlop, *Russia Confronts Chechnya: Roots of a Separatist Conflict*. Chapter 2.

³⁴ Peter J. Katzenstein and Robert O. Keohane, "Varieties of anti-Americanism: A Framework for Analysis." Paper presented at the Program for International Security Policy (PISP) workshop, May 2, 2006.

³⁵ Dunlop, *Russia Confronts Chechnya: Roots of a Separatist Conflict*.

This initial period covering the formation and strengthening of the Russian Federation offers strong evidence on the persistence of an empire in transition. On the one hand, no federal subjects successfully separated from the federation and the majority of the republics did not even express a desire to do so. On the other hand, the federation was often on the verge of collapsing. The central government was rather limited in its ability to enforce federal policy, regulate commerce, or even collect taxes. Principally, this was the result of a divided central government and an incoherent federal system. The political power of the federal subjects had increased greatly as result of Yeltsin's challenge and his delay in creating a strong central government. Further, prior to 1993 even minimal levels of coercion were not considered so that some republics were permitted to pull even further away. When force is eventually used to stem Chechnya's separation the results are very mixed.

The brutality of the two Chechen Wars hindered Russia's efforts at building transnational integration even though the federation had temporarily been preserved. In light of the fact that the most important factor holding the federation together at this time was a moderate to high level of transnational integration, there are potential long term effects from the use of coercion against Chechnya. Even though some of the ethno-nationalist regions demanded greater sovereignty, they did so in the context of remaining within the federation. Most of the non-ethnic Russian population clearly identified as being part of both an ethnic group and the Russian Federation. While tenuous, the Russian Federation has managed to persist despite a nationalistic periphery.

5.4 1999 – Present: Vladimir Putin

Under Yeltsin, the Russian Federation seemed to waiver between disintegration and the continuation of a federal state. Outside of the few regions that are still pushing for independence, however, there were very few federal subjects that actually desired complete independence from Russia. So what then are the purposes of Putin's reforms? Was this an attempt to refashion the Federation into a highly centralized, unitary state? While many scholars and politicians are debating Russia's apparent move away from democracy and federation, this chapter is not concerned with those results. Instead, I am interested in the viability of Russia and the ability of the central government to retain control of its peripheral regions. What effect are Putin's reforms having on the persistence of the Russian Federation as he takes on the challenge of transitioning from empire to federation while retaining the integrity of the former empire?

Cameron Ross finds that there is a general consensus within the Federation that something must be done to reinstate a single legal space within Russia.³⁶ The anarchy of the Yeltsin years resulted in federal regions becoming the personal fiefdoms of the governors. If the collapse of the Soviet Union was primarily attributable to a failed central bureaucracy, then the ability of the Russian Federation to persist will depend on Putin's ability to rebuild the central power. Alexander surmises that if reforms do not result in predictability and accountability, then

³⁶ Ross, "Federalism and Electoral Authoritarianism under Putin," 355.

"Russia will continue its patterns of corrupt and ineffective governance."³⁷ More directly, if Putin's reforms fail to create order, stability, and predictability, then Russia's persistence as a federation will be threatened by continued peripheral resistance. The persistence of the Russian Federation, whether as an empire or as a true democratic, federal republic will require acceptance from the periphery. This will only come about if Moscow is able to reestablish order and predictability through the judicious application of coercive force while encouraging transnational integration with and between all national groups.

Reporters Peter Baker and Susan Glasser found that many Russians were willing to accept less freedom if that meant greater stability for the country.³⁸ One of Putin's seven presidential envoys to the regions succinctly expressed this popular feeling. "Nowadays, the slogan is 'Unite for the common idea—the formation of a stable society, and effective social and economic development of the state built on the basis of stability.'"³⁹ Baker and Glasser also found that Putin's current popularity and success results from his vision for a stronger, more powerful Russia. For Putin this begins with reacquiring power for the central government that had been dispersed to the federal regions in the era of decentralization of Yeltsin. "His first targets were the governors of the eighty-nine regions that composed the Russian Federation, a motley collection of willful regional barons who had taken seriously Yeltsin's offer

³⁷ Alexander, "Federal Reforms in Russia: Putin's Challenge to the Republics," 257.

³⁸ Baker and Glasser, *Kremlin Rising: Vladimir Putin's Russia and the End of Revolution*.

³⁹ Interview with Georgy Poltavchenko quoted in *Ibid.* 261.

following the collapse of the Soviet system to 'take as much sovereignty as you can swallow.'"⁴⁰

This idea of a greater Russia is captured by the modern phrase, *Nashe*. In the past the term was used to distinguish that which was truly Russian or Soviet in much the same way as "Made in America" was an advertising slogan designed to capitalize on patriotism in the United States. Today, the term *nashe* is a mix of "anti-Americanism, xenophobia, and chauvinism that permeates everything from choosing food in supermarkets to advertising."⁴¹ It has become a rallying cry for everything that is great about the people of Russia. It is used as a mobilization tool to generate support and allegiance for Putin's project of strengthening the Russian Federation through reforming the central government. Historian Robert Johnson finds that much of the Russian public "is disenchanted with democracy, troubled by economic uncertainties, and receptive to appeals to past glory. In today's constellation of values, *order and stability* consistently outrank democratic representation or governmental accountability. Nostalgia for the lost empire correlates closely with a desire for strong and effective leadership." (emphasis added).⁴²

⁴⁰ Ibid. 84.

⁴¹ Natalya Ivanova quoted in Ibid. 67.

⁴² Robert E Johnson, *Quagmire of Convenience: The Chechen War and Putin's Presidency* (Canadian Institute of International Affairs, August 1 2005 [cited April 2006]); available from <http://web.lexis-nexis.com/universe/>.

5.4.1 Centralized Institutions

Without any coherent bureaucratic institutions federal subjects will be left to their own conceptions of the best way to build security and economic prosperity. "In Russia, institutions critical to the functioning of the state and the foundation of the unitary national identity, such as the administrative structure, army, and education system are in disarray."⁴³ Consequently, regional politics have so far dominated Russia's political space which has undermined the processes of trans-national integration. One of the keys functions of the new federal districts is to begin to create some minimal levels of uniformity within the federation.

One of the more effective bureaucratic changes that Putin has instituted is the creation of seven federal districts. As a way to oversee the reconciliation between federal and regional laws, these federal districts serve the purpose of bridging regional and ethnic differences that have typified Russian politics. In other words, the federal districts not only function to build legal stability, but also help foster integration and cooperation among various federal subjects. These reforms, however, were deeply criticized when first implemented. A conference was held in Moscow in September 2000 to evaluate Putin's reforms. Several scholars from the Russian regions voiced strong concerns that any strengthening of the central government would "destroy the first roots of federalism" that had been developing over the last

⁴³ Cynthia Buckley and Regina Smyth, "The Ties That Bind: The Importance of Region in the Construction of Social and Political Citizenship." In Blair A. Ruble, Jodi Koehn, and Nancy Popson, *Fragmented Space in the Russian Federation* (Washington, D.C. London Johns Hopkins University Press: Woodrow Wilson Center Press; Baltimore, 2001) 85.

ten years.⁴⁴ Complaints were primarily targeted at Putin's efforts to reduce the level of autonomy that the republics had previously enjoyed with regard to foreign policy and taxation. Not surprisingly, the more autonomous regions such as the republics were extremely reluctant to yield any power to the federal government.

Cameron Ross' perception is that "Putin's reforms have been driving the state towards the reinstitution of the Soviet-style principles of hierarchy and centralized administrative control from Moscow."⁴⁵ He is not alone. Many scholars fear that Putin style reforms are threatening the future of federalism and democracy in Russia. From the perspective of persistence, however, Putin's efforts to strengthen the federal government and reestablish centralized control of the periphery are very positive. There is some evidence to suggest that had the Russian system continued to pursue the "anarchic" politics of Yeltsin, that a greater number of republics and autonomous regions would have been inclined to pursue independence.

Bruce Ware from the Moscow Times feels that the state of Russian democracy is more nuanced than all these assessments have allowed. "For example, in the volatile North Caucasus region, the Kremlin has appointed some leaders who are highly principled and genuinely popular. Because of the intense factionalism of this

⁴⁴ "Russian Regional Report" (paper presented at the Russia Initiative / East West Institute, Moscow, 29-30 September 2000).

⁴⁵ Ross, "Federalism and Electoral Authoritarianism under Putin," 367.

region, some of these leaders could not have been elected to office.”⁴⁶ Similar to Soviet experiences in Eastern Europe, these Kremlin appointees are often more popular and their chances for success are much greater than their corrupt and ineffective predecessors who were “elected” to office. Ware goes on to report that even though the record of the appointees in the North Caucasus has been mixed, it has also provided “genuine administrative improvements.” More importantly, he believes that there are signs that the Kremlin is becoming more politically adept. “Moscow not only picked the best man for the job in Dagestan, but it did so with finesse that impressed people in the republic. If appointments like this are seen by local populations as serving their own best interests, then they cannot be hastily dismissed as anti-democratic.”⁴⁷

Moscow is also increasingly interested in reasserting Russian influence and control over many of the former Soviet republics. “By the fall of 1993, Russian foreign policy appeared to have shifted from its initial status quo orientation, aimed at doing nothing to reverse the loss of Moscow’s control over the former Soviet republics, to a careful but assertive policy on the southern axis, aimed at reestablishing Moscow’s hegemony based both on formal arrangements within the Commonwealth of Independent States and on the physical presence of Russian

⁴⁶ Robert Bruce Ware, *Picking the Best Man to Lead* (May 22 2006 [cited May 2006]); available from <http://www.russiaprofile.org/politics/2006/5/22/3742.wbp>.

⁴⁷ Ibid.

military forces in as many of the CIS members as possible.”⁴⁸ Results of Russian elections show a declining influence of Westernizing politicians and the government increasingly refers to the importance of supporting the “near abroad” despite the drain on the Russian economy.

The primary means for the wanting to regain control are economic and military. The Commonwealth of Independent States provides Russia with a loosely defined forum to initiate and advocate for greater military and economic cooperation. Many of the former republics are unable to develop their own military programs including a viable officer corps. This makes them dependent on Russian assistance and training. While the military was in significant disarray after the collapse of the Soviet Union, the institutional structure nevertheless remained a significant integrative feature. In the light of Putin’s strengthening of the central government, these former structures become avenues to reasserting control. The shift toward greater Russian control has also continued in the political processes as Moscow has been accused of trying to manipulate elections in Ukraine, Georgia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, and other former republics.⁴⁹ Belarus has already taken significant steps toward reunification with Russia agreeing to reunite the economies and strengthen their military relations.⁵⁰

⁴⁸ Odom, Dujarric, and Hudson Institute., *Commonwealth or Empire? Russia, Central Asia and the Transcaucasus* 116.

⁴⁹ See the Epilogue in Baker and Glasser, *Kremlin Rising: Vladimir Putin's Russia and the End of Revolution*.

⁵⁰ Harvard study cited by Odom and Dujarric. Odom, Dujarric, and Hudson Institute., *Commonwealth or Empire? Russia, Central Asia and the Transcaucasus* 161.

Another bureaucratic institution that has served this purpose since the collapse of the Soviet Union is the Russian Army. Putin does not consider Ukraine or other CIS members to be foreign countries. "Russia's attempts at influencing Ukrainian elections were never understood as interference in Moscow."⁵¹ This is not to imply that Russia is somehow trying to reclaim its empire, but there is definitely a sense that Putin (and many Russians) greatly regret the loss of these former Soviet republics. The CIS Collective Security Pact Organization, founded in May 2002, groups Russia, Belarus, Armenia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan. Under-secretary Valeriy Smerikov understands the importance of Collective Security Pact countries cooperating in military and military-technological spheres. "United Regional troop groupings and Collective Rapid Deployment Forces for the Central Asian region have been organized. Education, battle and operation trainings of the staff, subdivisions and units of the Forces are fulfilled according to the United program."⁵² Along with the military, nearly 2,500 foreign students and officers from these countries study at Russian Colleges in order to study technological advances and improve military interoperability.

⁵¹ Taras Kuzio, "Russian Policy toward Ukraine During Elections," in *Demokratizatsiya* (Heldref Publications, 2005), 515.

⁵² Viktor Litovkin, *Officers Should Speak the Same Command Language* (February 22-26 2006 [cited April 2006]); available from <http://web.lexis-nexis.com/universe/>.

5.4.2 Building Transnational Integration

One study finds evidence that citizens throughout Russian increasingly identify themselves as part of the Federation. "Reports in the popular press demonizing individuals seeking to leave the federation (as in Chechnya) or somehow threatening the safety of citizens from the outside (as with criminals from the Caucasus) strongly indicate...a notion of us (citizens) and them."⁵³ The authors also point out that the emergence of a national party system is one mechanism that will likely increase the integration of Russian political space. So long as constitutional reforms encourage the participation of regional parties in federal politics, institutions will once again reinforce and strengthen an integrative identity.

Ann Robertson recounts the difference between Tatarstan and Chechnya in their pursuit of greater autonomy. To begin with, the Tatarstan movement was not for national self-determination, but for autonomy, particularly control over the region's lucrative natural resources. This differs significantly with Chechnya which set as its only objective complete, independent sovereignty. There was no room for negotiation. Independence was a non-starter for Russia and received no support from the international community which recognized Russia's territory as including the breakaway republic. Politically, the "Chechen independence movement was handicapped by its leader's refusal to compromise, the near total destruction of

⁵³ Cynthia Buckley and Regina Smyth, "The Ties That Bind: The Importance of Region in the Construction of Social and Political Citizenship." In Ruble, Koehn, and Popson, *Fragmented Space in the Russian Federation*.

Soviet-era institutions, and the region's relative insignificance to Moscow."⁵⁴

Without the ability to negotiate or compromise it's not surprising that Russia and Chechnya reverted to armed conflict.

In neighboring Dagestan, the local population clearly identifies with Russia. Indeed, ties to Russia are strong here. Russian journalist, Nadeshda Kevorkova found that "everyone in Dagestan knows Russian – it serves as the only common language for the republic's 33 ethnic groups. Even Arabic has never played such a role."⁵⁵ When interviewing local residents, he found that they would "bristle" at suggestions that their region was not really part of Russia. "Why do you say, in 'our' Moscow?" replied one man during an interview with Kevorkova. "Moscow is our city too."⁵⁶ Kevorkova finds that many Russians think that Dagestan will someday become a second Chechnya. But he thinks there is a key difference between the two regions. "Here in Dagestan, Islam has been present for 1,400 years. And it is faith, rather than national priorities, that determines the people's behavior and aspirations."⁵⁷ In other words, the community is deeply interested in protecting its religious identity, rather than establishing a separate nation-state.

⁵⁴ Ann E. Robertson, "Yeltsin, Shaimiev, Dudaev: Negotiating Autonomy for Tatarstan and Chechnya." In Kempton and Clark, *Unity or Separation: Center-Periphery Relations in the Former Soviet Union* 115.

⁵⁵ Nadezhda Kevorkova, *Russian Islam: The View from Dagestan* (Russia Profile, December 2 2004 [cited May 2006]); available from <http://www.russiaprofile.org/culture/2004/12/2/2402.wbp>.

⁵⁶ Ibid.

⁵⁷ Ibid.

Still, Sergei Markedonov, who is the head of the Department for Inter-ethnic Relations at the Institute of Political and Military Analysis in Moscow, believes that some recent actions by Moscow may cause this to change. As part of President Putin's efforts to reduce federal asymmetries, Dagestan was forced to give up its bicameral legislature and institute a presidential system. Unfortunately, Dagestan is composed of several different ethnic Muslim groups and much of Dagestan's stability is attributed to its unique form of collegial rule that does not give any one group exclusive power. "The very fact that a single leader has now been chosen could cause a new split along ethnic lines and give a new separatist impulse to ethnic movements."⁵⁸ The three elections in the 1990s highlighted these splits, and some scholars fear that these feelings will resurface, especially now that the political stakes are much higher. More significantly, unlike the 1990s, when all the nationalities took part in presidential elections, the most recent president, Mukha Aliyev, was appointed from Moscow. "Aliyev will be held responsible along with the representatives of the Avar elite, the most numerous and now potentially the most powerful group in the republic."⁵⁹ Rather than increasing transnational integration and building acceptance for the government, Moscow's coercive attempt may well result in a fracture of the region.

⁵⁸ Sergei Markedonov, *The New Face of Dagestan* (Russia Profile, February 21 2006 [cited May 2006]); available from <http://www.russiaprofile.org/politics/2006/2/21/2779.wbp>.

⁵⁹ Ibid.

Dov Lynch who directs research on the former Soviet Union at the European Union Institute for Security Studies believes that the separatist regions of the former Soviet Union (including Chechnya, Nagorno-Karabakh, South Ossetia, Abkhazia, and Transnistria) will only be satisfied with recognition as sovereign states.⁶⁰ He does allow that some type of confederal arrangement may be acceptable for these “de facto” states, but only in conjunction with recognition of formal statehood. He believes that “any federalizing power-sharing agreement is likely to require external imposition and likely to lack a local perception of ownership.”⁶¹ Recognizing that complete independence for these regions is currently unacceptable to the metropolitan states, including Russia, Lynch outlines five elements of a coordinated international policy that would provide a “way out” of the current impasse.

To begin with, the central government needs to recognize the internal sovereignty of the regions while retaining external sovereignty for the metropolitan state. This is to be accompanied by economic support and guarantees of security. More importantly, he believes that a necessary element for restoring control is to build society-to-society links “at the political level, between elites who run the executive, legislative, and judicial branches of government; at the economic level between business elites and local traders, who should be able to operate in a more open market; and at the social level between educators, opinion makers, and

⁶⁰ Dov Lynch, *Engaging Eurasia's Separatist States: Unresolved Conflicts and De Facto States* (Washington, D.C.: United States Institute of Peace Press, 2004).

⁶¹ Ibid. 121.

students.”⁶² Through “society-to-society” links, the separatist regions will be more inclined to accept and even acquiesce to metropolitan leadership and eventually accept some type of federal structure. In short, Lynch is recommending that the metropolitan states work harder at building transnational integration rather than rely exclusively on coercive, military control.

In Chechnya, there is evidence that Russia has begun to take some of these initiatives. Almost two years after the brutal killings in Beslan by Chechen separatists, Moscow has granted a degree of autonomy to the Chechen government over its oil resources and there is potential that it will grant some relief from federal taxation as well. Current Chechen leaders are not only pro-Russian, but they are widely popular with the local population. Rather than ethnic Russians running the government and the bureaucracy, Chechens are now filling those positions. Commenting on the elections last year, Robert Bruce Ware finds that “Most Chechens have reservations about their constitution, but most Chechens are glad to have any constitution that might provide a framework for improved stability.”⁶³ He feels that the Chechen Deputy Prime Minister Akhmad Kadyrov and recently elected President Alu Alkhanov are supported by most Chechens because they have managed to make improvements in the security situation, and to take the first tentative steps toward economic recovery.

⁶² Ibid. 131.

⁶³ Quoted in Peter Lavelle, *Interview: A Step Forward in Chechnya?* (November 29 2005 [cited May 2006]); available from <http://web.lexis-nexis.com/universe/>.

During a press conference after the March legislative elections, chairman of the newly elected Chechen parliament, Dukvakha Abdurakhmanov, summarized a sentiment that appears to be growing in Chechnya today.

But I know one thing. I know that the President of the Russian Federation is absolutely honest with Chechen people and honest about events in Chechnya, for which we love, respect and support him. But sometimes we cannot understand what happens in some high offices or in the press or on television. Things that are sometimes told about the Chechen Republic can come only from people who have never seen it, who don't know that we were brought up on Russian culture, that we know Tolstoy, Pushkin and Lermontov better than people know them in other parts of the country. I can prove that. We are the only ethnic group that speaks Russian with no accent and better than others. But we still get this kind of treatment for some reason. We try to argue against that and prove that we are different. But this may take several years.⁶⁴

At one point during the conference Abdurakhmanov elaborates that Chechnya never wanted the Soviet Union to dissolve claiming that "Chechens were among the first to have voted for the preservation of the Soviet Union." More importantly, Abduakhmanov discussed how Chechnya has engaged a program of transnational integration called the Friendship Train. Representatives from Chechnya recently toured Russia traveling by train from the far eastern border to the western most point of the Federation, the city of Kaliningrad. They staged rallies in the different regions with the goal of breaking down ethnic barriers and to show that Chechens were good citizens

⁶⁴ *Press Conference with Chechen Parliament Speaker Dukvakha Abdurakhmanov Interfax, 13:30, March 30, 2006 (March 31 2006 [cited May 2006]).*

of the Federation. They were greeted warmly all over Russia showing that "there is no antagonism between Russian people and Chechen people."⁶⁵

Thus far, Putin seems to have regained limited acceptance from the periphery. Robert Johnson thinks that by hanging tough with Chechnya, "Moscow has strengthened its authority over the provinces."⁶⁶ Chechnya may also become the yard stick by which transnational integration is measured. Without aggressive reconstruction and increased political participation, the region may once again dream of building its own future, independent of Russia. The use of force appears to have reestablished control over the periphery, but the history of Soviet interventions demonstrates that it is the normalization of relations that is crucial to persistence.

Another recent attempt at building transnational integration is the Program for the Patriotic Education of Russian Citizens, signed into law in June 2005. The program hopes to instill patriotic values through portraying national symbols in the media and arts as well as developing patriotic sports clubs and summer camps. The idea behind the program is that Russian patriotism can no longer be taken for granted, but must be reinforced by all segments of society that touch upon the lives of young people including the arts, education and business. While the intuition is correct, the implementation is not necessarily well received by some segments of the population including politically active youth organizations. Encouraging patriotism has proven

⁶⁵ Ibid.

⁶⁶ Johnson, *Quagmire of Convenience: The Chechen War and Putin's Presidency* ([cited]).

effective in building cohesive even nationalist identity, but demanding it runs the risk of rejection and disbelief.⁶⁷ Instead, the federal government should be encouraging patriotism through education and institutions that relay the common histories and achievements of the Russian Federation.

Last year the Russian Federation organized an extensive campaign to commemorate the 60th anniversary of the end of World War II including visits by 37 world leaders. Rather than the May Day parade of the Soviet era that put the power of the Soviet Union on display for the world, these May events were used to educate Russian citizens about one of their greatest accomplishments—the defeat of Nazi Germany. Red and yellow ribbons, posters, banners, flags and billboards were used to proclaim pride and glory in the Soviet victory. “We wanted to create a kind of symbol that would unite all kinds of people, although, to be honest, at the start we were only really thinking about Moscow,” said Natalia Loseva of RIA Novosti news agency, one of the organizers of the campaign. “When we started speaking with historians and veterans, we realized that there was a problem – people today do not sufficiently value the role of our country in the biggest tragedy of the last century.”⁶⁸

The event symbolizes the greatness of Russia and celebrates one of the glorious moments in Russian history that citizens, regardless of ethnicity can be

⁶⁷ For an extensive treatment of how symbols can be used as simply another coercive tool see Wedeen, *Ambiguities of Domination: Politics, Rhetoric, and Symbols in Contemporary Syria*.

⁶⁸ Shaun Walker, *A Time for Pride* (Russia Profile, May 8 2006 [cited May 2006]); available from <http://www.russiaprofile.org/culture/2006/5/8/3666.wbp>.

proud of. It is a day when the remaining war veterans are given center stage and Russians feel great pride in their country and the decisive role of the Red Army in defeating the Germans. "There are still 100,000 war veterans living in Moscow, and about 450,000 people who lived through the war," said Alexander Chistyakov, first deputy director of Moscow's Municipal Department of Public Communications. "These people didn't just save us from fascism, they saved the whole of Europe from fascism, and the whole world should remember this."⁶⁹ As Chapter 3 argued, World War II clearly stands out as a unifying event for the Soviet Union. Today, by continuing these events and increasing public awareness of the war, the Russian Federation is hoping that patriotism will lead to integration between nationalities and regional ethnic groups.

Finally, James Alexander believes that Putin's current efforts to establish a unified media structure is "an attempt to undermine the national republics."⁷⁰ Representatives in each federal district will present information in a common language, presumably Russian. The policy clearly infringes upon a republic's prerogative to choose its own media language, but this will potentially help the federation build transnational ties. By creating an institution through which all citizens will eventually have similar access to information, ethnically diverse republics can now have some further commonalities. While language is not

⁶⁹ Ibid.

⁷⁰ Alexander, "Federal Reforms in Russia: Putin's Challenge to the Republics," 244.

necessarily the most important factor in establishing a nationalist identity, the ability to communicate across cultures and regions is vital to the integrative process of empire.

5.4.3 Summary

In many ways, it was Vladimir Putin who took the first steps toward reestablishing more persistent control over the periphery. By restoring some of the scope of power and building more coherent federal institutions, including the central government, he was able to increase stability and build expectations of predictability. Rhetorically, he also worked to create legitimacy for the central government's use of coercion and he has initiated federal programs aimed at building transnational integration. Often criticized as a return to former Soviet practices, his reforms have nevertheless allowed the federal government to build ministries that have the ability to regulate affairs across the federation. These ministries now have the scope of power to begin to enforce federal policies, build cohesive programs, and develop the transparency and predictability anticipated by the federal subjects.

Writing for Russia's *Gazeta*, Andrei Ryabov articulates what Putin seems to understand about the status of the federation. The territorial integrity of the Russian Federation does not depend on the strength or weakness of separatist movements in the provinces. Rather, it depends on "the extent to which the central government can pursue an effective policy with regard to the regions - a policy that takes their

interests into consideration."⁷¹ Putin has taken positive steps toward increasing transnational ties and stabilizing the central government. His use of coercion, however, has received mixed reviews. While demonstrating resolve and determination, the callous use of force during the war in Chechnya is nevertheless a blight on his presidency.⁷² To address this issue, Putin has charged the federal ministries to come up with a plan to rapidly rebuild the region. Leading a delegation of federal officials visiting the war torn republic, Economy Minister German Gref, announced that "The time has come to rebuild... We've realised there hasn't been enough attention from central authorities."⁷³ There is hope that with economic rebuilding and genuine reconstruction, the republic will once again become a more integrated and stable part of Russian society.

5.5 Conclusion

Even though the Russian Federation is still undergoing a transition, there are some definite conclusions that be can drawn from its ability to persist thus far. The initial years of the federation under Yeltsin can be seen now as a very tenuous hold on

⁷¹ Andrei Ryabov, *Is the Fatherland in Danger?* (Russia Profile, May 3 2005 [cited May 2006]); available from <http://www.russiaprofile.org/cdi/2006/2/1/3171.wbp>.

⁷² Jack, *Inside Putin's Russia* 336.

⁷³ "Russia Wants to "Breathe New Life" into Chechnya," *Gazeta*, May 17 2004.

the periphery. Many of the federal regions were successfully asserting their autonomy and even independence apart from the federation. The weakness of the central government and the loose association of the republics led several scholars to conclude that Russia during this period of time did not even function as a federation.⁷⁴ In fact, at the time the Constitution was signed in 1993, the federation was in grave danger of completely falling apart in what could well have become the second stage of the collapse of the Soviet Empire. Remarkably, there was sufficient transnational integration such that most citizens continued to identify with the federation despite the disarray of institutions shortly after the collapse of the Soviet Union.⁷⁵

Even with signing of the constitution, the federation was still in jeopardy of falling apart. Indeed if not for some aggressive politicking and multiple bi-lateral treaties the federation could still have gone the way of the Soviet Union. Chechnya's refusal to participate in the new constitution followed by its declaration of independence was an ominous warning that the federation was still justly loosely held together. Thus, extensive coercive force was finally required to keep all of the federation together. As is often the case when force is applied, mistakes were made

⁷⁴ This conclusion is based primarily on the fact that most of the federal districts maintained laws that were in direct conflict with federal statutes. For extensive treatments of this conclusion see Kahn, *Federalism, Democratization, and the Rule of Law in Russia*.; Ruble, Koehn, and Popson, *Fragmented Space in the Russian Federation*.; Baker and Glasser, *Kremlin Rising: Vladimir Putin's Russia and the End of Revolution*.

⁷⁵ For analysis of Russia's political and social identities see Ruble, Koehn, and Popson, *Fragmented Space in the Russian Federation*. and Sakwa, *Russian Politics and Society*.

that would severely damage future relations and hinder future negotiation. A more cohesive central government may have been able to act earlier and with more clarity and potentially prevented many of the atrocities that occurred.⁷⁶ That remains a counterfactual, but what is clear is that without intervention, Chechen separation would have simply become more entrenched.⁷⁷ Nevertheless, Yeltsin's efforts were only band-aids that temporarily stemmed the separatist forces in Chechnya and potentially prevented other groups from considering outright separation.

The most significant reforms have been implemented by Vladimir Putin. He has strengthened the role of the central government and increased his scope of power as the chief executive. There is a resurgence of pride and patriotism for Russia, and there are strong indications that transnational integration is being pursued throughout the Federation. The republic of Chechnya has also remained relatively stable with positive steps toward political reintegration and economic recovery. Table 5.1 summarizes the results of this analysis of the first decade and half of the Russian Federation.

⁷⁶ Valeri i Aleksandrovich Tishkov, *Chechnya: Life in a War-Torn Society*, *California Series in Public Anthropology*; 6 (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2004) 71-72.

⁷⁷ The Chechen Republic was essentially de-facto independent though not recognized internationally. For an account of Chechnya's separatists roots and path to independence see Dunlop, *Russia Confronts Chechnya: Roots of a Separatist Conflict*. and Carlotta Gall and Thomas De Waal, *Chechnya: Calamity in the Caucasus* (New York: New York University Press, 1998).

	Control	Coercion	Institutions	Integration
1989-1993	Low	Low	Low	Moderate
1993-1999	Moderate	Moderate	Low	Moderate
1999-Present	High	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate

Table 5.1 Strategies for the Russian Federation

Even though the federation is still in its infancy, the results nevertheless indicate that attempts to strengthen central institutions and foster transnational integration are leading to greater control of the periphery. For the Russian Federation, unless the periphery continues to be integrated into a common political and social space, there is the increased likelihood that Moscow will face separatist challenges in the future. Richard Sakwa argues that the Russian Constitution is a normative document that does not necessarily reflect current society, but one that Russian authorities hope to build. "The constitutional process in Russia today can therefore be seen as a dual revolution: both to achieve a *pravovoe gosudarstvo* (a state governing by law, based on the classical positivist conception of law) and to create a society governed by the rule of law to which the state itself is subordinated—in other words, genuine constitutionalism."⁷⁸ In this sense, Russian is undergoing an evolution not only from empire to federation, but from autocracy to democracy as well.

⁷⁸ Sakwa, *Russian Politics and Society* 70.

Based on my analysis of the Soviet Union and the Russian Federation, I would anticipate that the real test of Putin's reforms will come during the next leadership transition in the elections of 2008. Two things will need to happen. First, the use of coercive force in Chechnya will have to be replaced by institutional reforms and economic rebuilding. Continued measures of stability and predictability need to return to the region in order for Chechnya to accept Russian control. Second, elections for a new federal president must occur in accordance with the constitution. The lesson from the Communist Party's experience in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe reveals that transparency and predictability in the central bureaucracy are essential to establishing long term persistence. This is especially true of the central executive. If the already established rules for accession are tampered with, then the central government could once again find itself divided and in turmoil. Many of the primary federal institutions, such as the ministries, would then become paralyzed and the federal republics will out of necessity resort to regional institutions to provided stability.

As the previous chapters argued, during periods of leadership turnover in the Soviet Union, instability and lack of consensus at the center presented opportunities for the periphery to pull away. With the stability of Chechnya just now being established, a crisis of leadership in Moscow may well encourage increased agitation and potentially violent resistance from nationalists still intent on achieving independence. The Putin presidency thus far has presented some hope that the Russian Federation will persist in controlling the periphery. Following a meeting

with Vladimir Putin in June 2006, Henry Kissinger also expressed hope for the current Russian experiment. "One has to look at the evolution of countries and I have confidence in the Russian evolution."⁷⁹ From the perspective of this project, Kissinger's confidence may indeed be well placed.

⁷⁹ C. J. Chivers, "Putin Seeks to Reassure the West on Russia's Path," *New York Times*, June 7 2006.

CHAPTER 6

CONCLUSION AND EXTENSIONS: AN AMERICAN EMPIRE?

6.1 Introduction

Thus far, this dissertation has been limited to an analysis of the Soviet Union and the Russian Federation as empires. For methodological and practical reasons the project was limited to these empires in order to demonstrate the plausibility of a theory on imperial persistence. The Soviet Union was selected because it survived as a modern empire during a period of time when other theories of empire predicted otherwise. It was a very expansive empire that up until it collapsed controlled the most ethnically diverse periphery in the world even while other empires were collapsing. There was also great variation in how the Soviet Union attempted to maintain control of its different peripheral societies resulting in a robust comparative analysis of different imperial strategies. Further, by testing within a single empire, I was able to isolate external and intervening variables such as security competition or domestic politics that often make comparison between empires more problematic.

This chapter now addresses the possibility and implication of an American Empire. Whether in scholarly debate or casual conversation, whenever I have broached the topic of empire the discussion inevitably shifts to the subject of the United States as an empire. Unrivalled American power coupled with the recent occupations of Afghanistan and Iraq has turned the subject of empire, especially an American one, into a cottage industry. In the last year alone dozens of books have flooded the market eager to support or condemn the building of an American Empire. As John Ikenberry succinctly writes, "The debate on empire is back."¹ This debate not only concerns the emergence of an American Empire, but also whether or not the United States can maintain its preeminent position in the world if it continues to pursue an empire.

I begin my analysis of an American Empire by reviewing some of the lessons learned from the Soviet Union's 'experiment' with empire including the ongoing transition taking place in the Russian Federation. I then address whether or not the United States qualifies as an empire. Like the earlier analysis of the Russian Federation, the purpose of this section is not to settle claims over whether or not the United States is or is not becoming an empire. Instead, I will use the definition presented in this dissertation to evaluate the dynamics of American power so as to examine how the United States' behavior toward other countries may or may not be perceived as imperial. The final section briefly addresses current US foreign policies

¹ G. John Ikenberry, "Illusions of Empire," *Foreign Affairs* 83, no. 2 (2004).

including occupations of Iraq and the importance of institutions including the US military. The purpose of this section is to use the theory of imperial persistence to evaluate the effects of US policy on future foreign relations.

6.2 *Lessons on Empire*

There are three conclusions that can be drawn from this study of empire and the Soviet Union. First, coercion is often required, but not always necessary to maintaining control of an empire. The use of coercion or brute force, however, should be limited to containing rebellions or insurrection with the intent purpose of reestablishing order. The reluctance to use any amount of coercion in the Soviet Union and the Russian Federation left the central government vulnerable to attempts by the some of the periphery to separate, often successfully. Apart from these destabilizing situations of rebellion and insurrection, a reliance on coercion alone to maintain control is ineffective and counterproductive. It creates resentment and resistance in the periphery and usually results in the need to use more force.² This was especially true in the Soviet Union when excessive force was used to quell demonstrations, silence protestors, or even purge dissenters. The examination of the Soviet Union's experience under Stalin revealed the extent to which excessive

² Jack Snyder comes to a similar conclusion about empires in his discussion of the 'myths of empire.' Jack Snyder, "Imperial Temptations," *National Interest*, no. 71 (2003).

coercion and terror undermined the stability of society. In short, coercion is only truly effective as a method of control for short periods of time.

This leads to the second conclusion. In order to persist for long periods of time, empires must build acceptance for the central government and its use of coercion. This requires centralized institutions that primarily provide order, stability, and predictability for society, as well ongoing transnational integration to create ties between the center and the peripheries. The case studies showed that when the Soviet Union legitimized its use of coercion by maintaining strong centralized institutions and building transnational integration, its ability to persist increased. This was true during the period of Khrushchev and to a lesser extent under Brezhnev. Gorbachev's dismantling of the Communist Party and the subsequent loss of power for the Soviet central government resulted in an inability to provide order, prosperity and more importantly security for the republics. In the end, there simply was no longer a well functioning centralized bureaucracy. Gorbachev had little power to regulate events in the republics and was unable to solve or even address the deep social and economic problems facing the Union. Nevertheless, as a result of moderate levels of transnational integration, the possibility existed even up to the moment it collapsed that a new type of Union could have been formed.

In Eastern Europe, the absence of centralized institutions highlighted the requirement to consistently resort to coercion and force. While the Soviet Union did create some institutions to regulate relationships with Eastern Europe, these

organizations did not have sufficient concentration and scope of power to be able to create and enforce policies. The absence or weakness of bloc institutions meant that the only effective way the Soviet Union could resolve a crisis was to resort to coercion. This was particularly true when the Soviet empire faced any type of social or economic crises as in 1956, 1968, and the 1980s. Without institutions to resolve the problems, the Soviets were only left with coercion to reestablish stability and control. This continued reliance on coercion built resentment and led to increased acts of resistance and rebellion. More importantly, while the possibility existed for the Soviet Union to persist in its control of most of the Soviet republics, there was no indication that this would have been the case with Eastern Europe. In fact, once Soviet troops were withdrawn, Eastern Europe quickly realigned itself with the Western Europe as opposed to maintaining close relationships with the Soviet Union. Further, all of the Bloc institutions were disbanded, and most of the countries have now joined or are in the process of joining not only the European Union but NATO as well. In contrast, most of the former Soviet republics are today still aligned, at least nominally, with the Russian Federation as part of the Commonwealth of Independent States.

Finally, empires require a strong central executive particularly when facing challenges from the periphery. In the Russian Federation, Vladimir Putin has taken the first steps toward reestablishing more persistent control over the periphery. By restoring some of the scope of power of the central government and building more coherent federal institutions, he was able to increase stability and build expectations

of predictability. This stability and order has resulted in legitimacy for the central government's relatively limited use of coercion. Often criticized as a return to former Soviet authoritarian practices, his reforms have nevertheless allowed the federal government to build ministries that have the ability to regulate affairs across the federation. These ministries now have the scope of power to begin to enforce federal policies, build cohesive programs, and develop the transparency and predictability anticipated by the federal subjects. There is also a resurgence of pride and patriotism for Russia, and there are strong indications that transnational integration is being pursued throughout the Federation.

This is not to suggest that empires need a dictator or that democracy and empire are completely incompatible. Persistence is not the result of a high concentration of power at the top that is neither accountable nor constrained in any way. Rather, a strong executive is more likely to have the decision-making capability to quickly resolve a crisis and restore stability. Power unconstrained can lead to greater instability and unpredictability as the rule of law is supplanted by the whim of those in charge. For that reasons, even strong executive need institutions that regulate and codify relationships between the center and the periphery. As the Russian Federation seems to indicate, democracy and empire are not always compatible. Nevertheless, even the most persistent empires must engage a process of becoming something other than empire. The potential exists that empires can transition to a multinational of federal state, but not without strong centralized institutions that maintain stability and predictability for society.

6.3 *Empire and Unipolarity*

Few people disagree that the United States is a hegemonic power; but, significant debate rages over whether that power should be referred to as an empire. As John Ikenberry argues, if the United States is an empire, than it is a fundamentally different type of empire.³ Nevertheless, it seems that Washington is already intent on "running the world" and has been so for some quite some time even though they would rather not call it an empire.⁴ Consequently, some have set about recommending rules for how the United States should "manage an unruly world," while others are predicting the inevitable collapse of the American hegemonic system if it continues to pursue an empire.⁵ Not surprisingly, among these discussions the use and understanding of the term 'empire' is rarely consistent. I will therefore return to my definition of empire as a starting point for evaluating the current role of the United States in the world.

³ Ikenberry, "Illusions of Empire."

⁴ Stephen Kinzer, *Overthrow: America's Century of Regime Change from Hawaii to Iraq*, 1st ed. (New York: Times Books, 2006).; Alexander Cockburn and Jeffrey St. Clair, *Imperial Crusades: Iraq, Afghanistan and Yugoslavia: A Diary of Three Wars* (London; New York: Verso, 2004).; Chalmers A. Johnson, *The Sorrows of Empire: Militarism, Secrecy, and the End of the Republic*, 1st ed. (New York: Metropolitan Books, 2004).; Anatol Lieven, *America Right or Wrong: An Anatomy of American Nationalism* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2004).; Michael Mann, *Incoherent Empire* (London; New York: Verso, 2003).; A. J. Bacevich, *American Empire: The Realities and Consequences of U.S. Diplomacy* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2002).

⁵ Kaplan, "Supremacy by Stealth," 1.; see also Rosen, "An Empire, If You Can Keep It."; and Richard Haass, *The Reluctant Sheriff: The United States after the Cold War* (New York: Council on Foreign Relations Press, 1997).

I have argued that empire is a hierarchical system in which one political society (the metropole) controls the internal and external politics of another political society (the periphery). Despite arguments to the contrary, the United States is no newcomer when it comes to empire. Some scholars even suggest that the United States was organized and established as an ideal empire.⁶ This follows from the view that the United States has been expanding since its inception and that it had a commitment to empire built into its structure. Always a reluctant imperial power, the United States has nonetheless established an impressive portfolio of territorial conquests.

Whether or not the title is used, the United States has had varying experiences at controlling the internal and external politics of other societies and states. The westward expansion of the United States against Native Americans; the seizure and occupation of Hawaii, the Philippines, and Puerto Rico; or covert involvement in South American politics, are just a few examples of the United States attempting to control the internal and external politics of other political societies. Today, the term "United States" when used in official documents, acts, and laws includes the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, the Virgin Islands, Guam, and American Samoa. Formally, that means the United States controls twelve unincorporated territories, also known as possessions, and two commonwealths. Informally, the United States also

⁶ For some examples see Bacevich, *American Empire: The Realities and Consequences of U.S. Diplomacy*, or James Muldoon, *Empire and Order: The Concept of Empire, 800-1800* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1999) 140.. Muldoon even argues that Thomas Jefferson viewed the United States as an "empire of liberty."

maintains occupation forces (sometimes euphemistically referred to as stability forces) in Bosnia, Kosovo, Afghanistan, and most conspicuously in Iraq. In all of these occupied areas, the United States wields considerable political power over the local governments.

Some scholars view the international system as a hierarchical spectrum of power. When actors in the system are more equal in power, there is no dominant state and therefore no hierarchy. As one state grows in power, there is a shift toward hierarchy, particularly as the more powerful state attempts to restructure the international system. Complete or absolute hierarchy is designated as empire.⁷ From this perspective, the United States can be viewed as establishing a more hierarchical order in the international system. The US currently is a hegemon in the Western Hemisphere, and it has deployed its military throughout the world with the explicit purpose of providing security and stability for its allies and the protection of its national interests. Even the establishment of NATO and the world economic institutions has been viewed as an imperial project.⁸

⁷ This system was described in Chapter 2 and follows from Adam Watson's theory on international systems. Watson, *The Evolution of International Society: A Comparative Historical Analysis*. Bob Pape also lays out the difference between balance of power systems and hegemonic systems. Robert A. Pape, "Soft Balancing against the United States," *International Security* 30, no. 1 (2005).

⁸ Dana Priest equates the role of US military leaders to that of Roman proconsuls. Dana Priest, *The Mission: Waging War and Keeping Peace with America's Military*, 1st ed. (New York: W.W. Norton, 2003).; Niall Ferguson, *Colossus: The Price of America's Empire* (New York: Penguin Press, 2004).

The United States also dominates the world as no state ever has. "For the first time in the modern era, the world's most powerful state can operate on the global stage without the constraints of other great powers."⁹ This dominance of American power had become known as the unipolar moment and it represent a shift along the spectrum toward absolute hierarchy. There is an ongoing debate on whether or not the United States can maintain this position in the world and the consequences for international relations.¹⁰ From the perspective of this project, whether or not these institutions qualify the United States as empire is secondary to perceptions of American imperialism. In order to build acceptance for American power and "leadership", the United States needs to exercise power through rules and institutions while engaging other countries culturally and socially. According to Ikenberry, "Americans are less interested in ruling the world than they are in creating a world of rules."¹¹ A world of rules, however, still requires some type of hierarchy if for no other reason than to simply establish the rules.¹²

⁹ Ikenberry, "Illusions of Empire."

¹⁰ For differing perspectives on American unipolarity see G. John Ikenberry, *America Unrivaled: The Future of the Balance of Power*, *Cornell Studies in Security Affairs* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2002), William C. Wohlforth, "The Stability of a Unipolar World," in *International Security* (MIT Press, 1999).

¹¹ Ikenberry, "Illusions of Empire."

¹² On the importance of a hegemonic state to the development of institutions see Robert Gilpin, *War and Change in World Politics* (Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1981), Ikenberry, *After Victory: Institutions, Strategic Restraint, and the Rebuilding of Order after Major Wars*, Robert O. Keohane, *After Hegemony: Cooperation and Discord in the World Political Economy* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1984).

Hierarchy does not automatically mean empire; but, when that hierarchy results in greater external and internal political control of another society, then a transition to empire is underway. Without considering intentions, the actions by the United States against Afghanistan and Iraq to establish new political structures clearly represent a transition toward empire. If the United States continues to effectively control Iraq or pursue other attempts to reform the Middle East through occupation and imposed democracy, then history may well record this period of time as the emergence of an American Empire. More importantly, Soviet and Russian experiences demonstrate that institutions and the pursuit of transnational integration are necessary in order to build enduring acceptance for any type of hierarchical order.

6.4 US Foreign Policy

The modern international environment considers empire to be an antiquated form of state control, so that any type of imperial pursuits must be perceived as something other than empire. In 1944, the Soviet Union marched across Eastern Europe to defeat the Nazis. They came as liberators with a socialist ideology that promised to at last free the East Europeans from the oppressive fascist regime of Hitler. This was not an empire—this was bringing together fraternal communist workers and spreading international socialism. Like the Soviets, the Bush administration has marched into Baghdad with an ideology that seemingly masks its

more imperial ambitions.¹³ In his State of the Union address in 2006, President Bush championed the need to spread democracy and “act boldly in freedom’s cause.” Yet many people today, like Czeslav Milosz in 1944, are beginning to recognize that the spreading of “freedom and democracy” is clearly something more akin to imperial control than liberation.¹⁴

Robert Pape makes a similar argument about the perception of US intentions and whether other states will balance against its power. “In a unipolar world, states balance against threat, defined by the power and aggressive intentions of the revisionist state.”¹⁵ Despite being the world’s strongest state throughout the twentieth century, and now the leader of a unipolar system, the United States has not encountered balancing from the other major powers. Pape believes there are three possible reasons why, but the one that has been especially important over the past ten years is America’s reputation for benign intent.¹⁶ More significantly, Pape argues that the current national security strategy is affecting that reputation. “These policies are changing how other states view American intentions and the purposes behind American power, putting at risk America’s long-enjoyed reputation for benign

¹³ David C. Hendrickson and Robert W. Tucker, “The Freedom Crusade,” *National Interest*, no. 81 (2005).

¹⁴ Snyder, “Imperial Temptations,” 36.

¹⁵ Pape, “Soft Balancing against the United States.”

¹⁶ Ibid.

intent.”¹⁷ Empire is a political system of imposed hierarchy. So long as the peripheral societies view that system as imposed, then the potential for resistance will exist. The key to building an enduring political system, empire or otherwise, is to pursue policies that encourage the subordinate states to accept and even want to continue to participate in that hierarchical order.

There are three ways the United States has traditionally managed its putative empire. The first and most obvious way is through military campaigns throughout the world, most noticeably in Afghanistan and Iraq. Additionally, the United States has continued to create and support international regimes particularly for the establishment of free trade and a world market. Finally, by using military forces endowed with broad authority and capabilities, the US has attempted to influence other political societies through a process of engagement. The attacks on Serbia and the invasion of Iraq and Afghanistan seem to fall clearly in the category of establishing an international hierarchy through brute military force. But now that the hierarchy has been determined, the next requirement is to build strong institutions and foster integration with their societies. The theory presented in this dissertation suggests that in order for the United States to persist as a world leader, it should now work to develop increased levels of transnational integration with Serbia, Kosovo, Afghanistan, and Iraq.

¹⁷ Ibid.

6.4.1 Transnational Integration

One of the more dramatic examples of what that might look like is the National Guard State Partnership Program. Originally implemented in 1993, the National Guard program is designed to: demonstrate military subordination and support to civilian authority; assist in the development of democratic institutions; foster open market economies to help bring stability; and project and represent US humanitarian values. Thirty one American states and territories have been linked with partner countries' defense ministries and other government agencies for the purpose of improving bilateral relations. "The example of the Guard's citizen-soldier underscores the role of the military in a democratic society."¹⁸ The success, and expansion, of the program has resulted in an engagement tool that fosters interaction in social and economic, as well as military, spheres. According to the National Guard Bureau, "The value of the State Partnership Program is its ability to focus the attention of a small part of the Department of Defense (DoD)—a state National Guard—on a single country or region in support of overall US policy and strategy."¹⁹ This concentrated focus allows for the development of long-term relationships and has become a mechanism to catalyze support from outside DoD which otherwise would not occur. Certainly, this program demonstrates considerable influence

¹⁸ "The National Guard State Partnership Program," *Michigan Department of Military and Veteran Affairs*, available from http://www.michigan.gov/dmva/0,1607,7-126-2364_11700-22962--,00.html.

¹⁹ Ibid.

exerted by a hegemonic power over the formation and construction of a sovereign state, but precisely because cultures are being integrated through the sharing of knowledge, it does not require an invasion to influence state policy.

The partnership that Michigan has developed with Latvia has grown to be more than just military in nature. Latvia and Michigan refer to their strong partnership by the Latvian word *Sadarbiba*, which translates to "working together."²⁰ Leaders from business, industry, and government in Latvia and Michigan have exchanged several visits with the goal of not only developing strong civil-military relationships in Latvia, but also to assist in the transition to a democratic, market economy. A dynamic private sector now accounts for more than half of Latvia's GDP and there is a continuing growth of trade ties with the West—including, not so surprisingly, the state of Michigan.²¹ Programs like this one, occurring at almost a grass roots level, are permitting the United States to extend its influence even beyond its own informal empire.

In presenting the example of the National Guard program I am not inferring that Latvia or any other partner country is a part of an informal American Empire. I offer this as an example of how the United States can use information and transparency as a way to diffuse conflict and promote cooperation within and without the empire. Charles Lipson argues that part of the explanation for the democratic

²⁰ Ibid.

²¹ Ibid.

peace is that the transparent nature of democracies is an information device that “diminishes the likelihood of bluffing, gives partners advance notice of policy changes, and lessens the dangers of surprise.”²² A similar transparency, used to develop political, cultural, and economic integration, can be applied to the creation and management of an empire. One of the reasons empires have declined is because resources were over-extended in trying to establish stability and order primarily through military action. Transnational relationships and integration have helped empires achieve greater security with less associated costs through an exchange of information and perceived transparency. Not so surprisingly therefore, the previous three National Security Strategies, under two very different administrations, have advocated this particular strategy that at one time was explicitly referred to as engagement.²³ The production and sharing of “high-quality” information facilitates agreements and encourages cooperation that would not be possible under conditions of high uncertainty.²⁴

²² Charles Lipson, *Reliable Partners: How Democracies Have Made a Separate Peace* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2003) 173.

²³ President Clinton’s first national strategy actually used the phrase, ‘Global Engagement’. That was changed to simply ‘engagement’ in the second version. See *National Security Strategy of the United States*, 1995, 1998, 2002.

²⁴ Keohane, *After Hegemony: Cooperation and Discord in the World Political Economy* 245.

6.4.2 Centralized Institutions

The empires of the Romans, the Ottomans, the British, and even the Soviet Union are not the same type of empire the United States appears to be creating today. But to the extent that each of these governance structures was faced with the common problem of establishing order across vast territories with great ethnic, national, and cultural diversity then it is useful to draw some conclusions for what empires (or states that act like empires) should do to persist. The collapse of the Soviet Union and the attempt to restore control in the Russian Federation clearly reveals the importance of institutions and integration. Without some type of strong centralized institution or any transnational integration, the only method of control left is coercion. The invasion of Iraq provides another grim reminder of this point. With almost no integration developing among the Iraqi people, the destruction of the government and Iraqi institutions left the country unstable and highly unpredictable. The long delay in establishing a central government while trying to rebuild the infrastructure has failed to achieve the most basic requirements of securing order and stability within the country. Rather than focus first on rebuilding the country, the emphasis should have been on creating Iraqi institutions.

The central government is the key to persistent control. Like the Russian Federation, this shifts the focus from spreading democracy and freedom, to strengthening the central government and building transnational ties with the regions. The Iraq Policy Working Group at the Brookings Institute proposed seven solutions

to the current problems plaguing Iraq.²⁵ The majority of the proposal concerned reestablishing security and protection of the Iraqi people and strengthening the central government. Currently, the Iraqi central government lacks the resources and the institutions to tackle any of the challenges facing the country. As Ken Pollack describes the situation, "Iraq ministries are understaffed and eviscerated by endemic corruption of a kind that compares unfavorably even with Saddam Hussein's regime. Iraq's political leaders are consumed by discussions over power-sharing, and often care little about their constituents. The Iraqi capital is incapable of doing much for the Iraqi people, but quite capable of preventing the rest of the country from providing for itself."²⁶ Pollack does not see the likelihood of restoring power to the Iraqi central government coming any time soon, so he recommends providing resources directly to local government. However, he also argues that the key to reestablishing security and order in Iraq is to create a central, unified command structure. Without elaborating what this would look like, he is nevertheless advocating some type of centralized security ministry that would coordinate various government agencies charged with establishing order and security.

Gorbachev wanted to promote greater freedoms and democracy, but he did so at the expense of order and stability. Similarly in Iraq, the catchwords of "freedom and democracy" have animated the Bush administration's strategy while chaos and

²⁵ A summary of these findings is presented by Kenneth Pollack. See Kenneth M. Pollack, "The Right Way," *Atlantic* 297, no. 2 (2006).

²⁶ *Ibid.*: 110.

instability have been rampant. The invasion of Iraq removed all centralized control and left the country without a government. Four years and three governments later, Iraq has finally entered a period where it may be able to once again restore order and stability.²⁷ Without centralized institutions that can establish security and protect society, regardless of how democratic, there is little chance that Iraq will ever become a functioning, democratic society. Further, the new Iraqi government should concentrate its efforts on protecting society rather than hunting down insurgents.²⁸ Defense, not offense may well be the best strategy for regaining control of the country. As this dissertation has shown, the methods by which stability and order are maintained, empire or otherwise, will determine the persistence of any hierarchical system.

²⁷ Kenneth M. Pollack, "Five Ways to Win Back Iraq," *New York Times* 154, no. 53262 (2005).

²⁸ Joel Brinkley, "Give Rebuilding Lower Priority in Future Wars, State Dept. Says, Spurning Iraq Strategy," *New York Times* 2006.

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